

# KEEPING THE *Faith*



A HISTORY OF  
TENNESSEE WESLEYAN COLLEGE  
1857-2007

BILL AKINS    GENEVIEVE WIGGINS

*Keeping the Faith* tells the story of a small, church-related college in Athens, Tennessee, and follows its trials and triumphs through 150 years. Known since 1925 as Tennessee Wesleyan College, the school has operated under seven different titles and has been led by twenty different presidents. Beginning with one college building, a faculty of five, and seventy students, its campus now has twenty-one buildings, and its student enrollment approaches 1,000.

Tennessee Wesleyan's journey from 1857 to 2007 has not been on a smooth road. From its beginning, it has struggled to maintain a viable student enrollment in competition with larger, more prosperous institutions and has faced financial problems that, at times, seemed insurmountable. Yet it has survived wars, the Great Depression, various economic challenges, and the proliferation of state-sponsored institutions.

During its 150 years, the college has seen many changes. Where buggy rides away from the campus were once forbidden, there is a growing need for more parking lots to accommodate students' automobiles. Where "play-acting" was once suspect and dancing frowned upon, an annual musical production with lively song and dance became the highlight of the school year. Where the study of Latin and Greek once formed an important part of the curriculum, students now must be computer literate and prepare themselves for the challenges of a global economy.

Tennessee Wesleyan has seen many changes, but one thing has never changed, its mission to achieve the best in Christian higher education. Carrying out this mission were a long line of dedicated educators who indeed kept the faith and students who profited from their example. This book is their story.

For Sandra,


With love and best  
wishes,

Genevieve Wiggins  
To a wonderful friend,  
Bill Klein









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KEEPING  
THE  
*Faith*

— A HISTORY OF —  
TENNESSEE WESLEYAN COLLEGE  
1857-2007

GENEVIEVE WIGGINS  
BILL AKINS

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For additional copies of the book, or for information  
about Tennessee Wesleyan College, contact:

Office of the President  
Tennessee Wesleyan College  
204 East College Street, P.O. Box 40  
Athens, Tennessee 37371-0040  
**[www.twcnet.edu](http://www.twcnet.edu)**



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Quotations from John and Charles Wesley used as chapter headings are from the 1878 edition of *Hymnal of the Methodist Episcopal Church*.

To the students of Tennessee Wesleyan College,  
past, present, and future,  
that they may appreciate their great heritage.

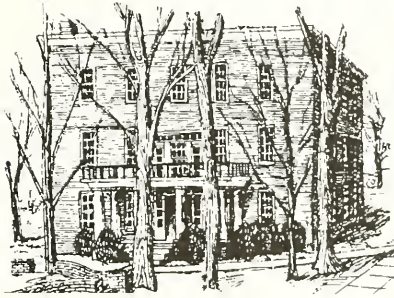
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## FOREWORD



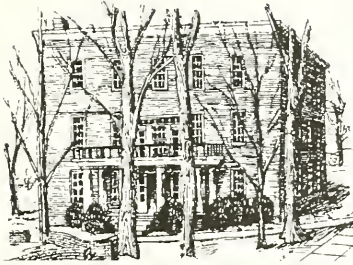
There is a small college in Athens, Tennessee, which has never made national headlines, has never reached an enrollment beyond 900, and is probably unknown to the majority of the citizens of the United States. Yet this college has among its graduates distinguished physicians, lawyers, teachers, ministers, entrepreneurs, and government leaders. In an area of Appalachia not noted for intellectual achievement, it has stood for 150 years as a beacon lighting the way to knowledge and to a faith that goes beyond human knowledge. Guided by that faith, it has survived wars, financial hardships, and social upheavals. It has seen many changes, but its mission to achieve the best in Christian higher education has never changed.

Daniel Webster, speaking in 1818 to the Supreme Court regarding Dartmouth College, said, "It is a small college, yet there are those who love it."\* The same may be said of Tennessee Wesleyan. The authors are among that group and lovingly offer this historical account to the many others who cherish the "teeny weeny" college known as Tennessee Wesleyan.

\* Quoted in John Longwith, *Light Upon a Hill, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga*, 2000.



## CHAPTER 1 IN THE BEGINNING: 1857-1866



“Let all who owe to thee their birth  
in praises every hour employ.”

- John Wesley

In 1857 an unfinished brick building stood on two acres of land in Athens, Tennessee, a small, primarily agricultural community with a population of about 1,200. After its completion, this three-story building would become the core of a college ultimately to be known as Tennessee Wesleyan College.

The school had a troubled beginning during uncertain times, for already political and social agitation existed which would lead, four years later, to the devastation of the War Between the States.

The idea of establishing an institution of higher learning in Athens originated with members of a fraternal organization, McMinn Lodge 54 of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. This organization had, in January 1854, obtained a charter from the State of Tennessee authorizing the establishment of a school to be called Odd Fellows Female College. In sponsoring such an institution, the McMinn lodge was following the example of lodges in other locations which fostered educational institutions. At the time the McMinn lodge announced its plan, a college with more than two hundred female students was based in Rogersville, Tennessee, having been established by the Hawkins County Odd Fellows. Several similar institutions founded by the Odd Fellows were operating elsewhere. However, Odd Fellows Female College in Athens never opened, not because of its somewhat amusing name but because of financial difficulties.<sup>1</sup>

The *Athens Post* of May 19, 1854, praised the intention of the Odd Fellows, and Sam Ivins, editor, expressed confidence that the institution would flourish. A site having been acquired, bids were solicited for the construction of a three-story brick building approximately seventy-five feet long and forty-four feet wide. Members of the building committee included: J. B. Taylor, H. H. Riden, J. B. Shipman, J. W. Gillespie, A. H. Keith, Thomas Cleage, and L. Gamble. On July 20, 1855, the *Post* reported that the walls were nearly all up, and completion of the building was anticipated

within “a matter of days.” Editor Ivins wrote enthusiastically of the project, noting that while other towns and villages were “using their energies to erect manufacturing,” if Athens could “succeed in building up such an institution of learning as is desired and contemplated by the Odd Fellows . . . we should accomplish a much greater good for society and for posterity than we could hope for by the achievement of any enterprise which promised a mere accumulation of dollars and cents.” Individuals who had pledged funds in support of the building project were urged to pay the amounts pledged immediately.

The greatest deterrent to the building’s completion came with the discovery that the land purchased from William Lowry was tied up in litigation between the Lowry family and the family of John McGlen. The Odd Fellows were reluctant to continue construction on a plot of land the ownership of which was in question. Moreover, the “mere accumulation of dollars and cents” which Editor Sam Ivins had denigrated became a crucial factor. Bills owed to workers and to suppliers of materials were in arrears. Having decided that they had underestimated the cost of the project, lodge members turned their attention to finding a buyer.<sup>2</sup>

In October 1857, trustees approached the Holston Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, meeting in Marion, Virginia. Apparently, these trustees were a group of Athens citizens who had bought the property from the Odd Fellows for \$3,500. They offered to transfer this property to the Holston Conference, asking that a president be appointed and that \$2,000 be raised for the completion of the building. They further recommended the purchase of two additional acres to accommodate the construction of a boarding house. The acceptance of this offer began the church affiliation of an institution which has existed under one of the branches of the Methodist Church from 1857 to the present.<sup>3</sup>

The charter granted by the Tennessee General Assembly in 1857 provided for an educational institution for young women to be known as Athens Female College. The college was to be operated by the Holston Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

An explanation of the Southern branch of the Methodist Church seems in order. Methodism in the United States had split over the issue of slavery in 1844 and did not reunite until 1939. Northern Methodism attempted, aggressively but unsuccessfully, to squelch Southern Methodist churches and their rebel preachers. Leading the battle in East Tennessee was William G. Brownlow (“Fighting Parson Brownlow”), once a Methodist circuit rider who later became editor of the *Knoxville Whig* and, still later, Governor of Tennessee. Brownlow vehemently attacked not only the Devil but Democrats, Rebels, and Southern Methodists. Some inhabitants of East Tennessee, where Union sympathy was strong, shared his opinions, but others resented his authoritarian tactics. The result was a divided church with branches colloquially known as “Methodists North of God and Methodists South of God.” As has been noted, Athens Female College was established by those “South of God.”<sup>4</sup>

The charter named the following as trustees of the college: John F. Slover,



William M. Sehorn, R. M. Fisher, William H. Ballew, Alexander H. Keith, R. C. Jackson, George W. Bridges, M. L. Phelps, T. Sullins, Thomas Hoyle, W. E. Hall, S. K. Reeder, Willie Lowry, Andrew Hutsell, John L. Bridges, and Samuel P. Ivins. The Reverend Sewell Phillips was appointed to solicit funds, and the Reverend Erastus Rowley was named president.<sup>5</sup>

President Erastus Rowley, a native of Massachusetts, was a graduate of Union College in Schenectady, New York, and had experience as a faculty member and administrator in schools in New York, North Carolina, and South Carolina. He was the first of a succession of college presidents to come to Athens after being born and educated in the North.

Following his appointment, President Rowley moved to Athens and began to prepare for the opening of Athens Female College. He also found time to direct a half session of classes for young women in a room in the Forest Hill Academy, the college building being still uncompleted. According to the *Athens Post*, these classes were intended as a preparatory school for a group of young women "now idle." It was anticipated that several of these pupils would continue their education at the new college.<sup>6</sup>

Athens Female College opened on September 10, 1858, with a faculty of five, including President Rowley who followed the custom of early college presidents by serving as teacher as well as administrator. The 1858 faculty consisted of:

Erastus Rowley, M.A., President and Professor of Ancient Languages,  
Higher Mathematics, and Mental and Moral Science,

Mr. L. T. Schultz, Professor of Instruments and Music, and  
Teacher of the German language,

Miss Amelia M. Tompkins, Teacher of Belles-lettres, composition,  
drawing and painting, and the French language,

Miss Ben M. Carey, Teacher of mathematics, natural science and embroidery,

Miss Elizabeth Tompkins, Assistant teacher of music and teacher  
in the Primary Department.<sup>7</sup>

Seventy young women were the first enrollees. Local citizens were gratified that a cherished dream was at last realized, that the college promised community distinction and increased local revenue, and that parents no longer needed to send their daughters away from home to be educated. Also, Athenians, who, after all, had named their town for the cultural center of Ancient Greece, had a special interest in learning and the arts and rightly regarded the college as a cultural asset. In 1857 this small town was home to two academies, a bookstore, a newspaper, a literary society (Athens

Literary Association), and a musical academy. The latter offered instruction in piano, violin, guitar, flute, clarinet, saxophone, and harmonica as well as lessons in French and German.

The *Athens Post* described the college building, completed in 1858, as follows:

The building stands on an eminence in the northern part of the town. It is of brick, forty-three feet wide and sixty-six in length, three stories high--first and second stories twelve feet each, third fifteen feet. There are eight rooms in the first and second stories, with four large rooms in each and an ample fireplace. Each room would comfortably seat forty. The Lecture Room, or Hall, is on the third story and is the whole extent of the building, furnishing a room forty-three by sixty-six feet in width and length. Below there is a hall or passage, and the stairs are constructed so as to be of easy ascent. Fronting South, there is a portico forty feet long and thirteen feet wide, and rising to the second story. The rooms are plastered and painted throughout.<sup>8</sup>

Although not elaborate or ornamental, this building, now known as Old College, was then and is now one of the most beautiful structures in the area and a fine example of the Federal style of architecture.

Few records exist of the early years of Athens Female College, but a catalog of 1860 offers considerable information. The academic year was divided into two sessions, Fall (early September to December 23) and Spring (early February to late June). The degree of Mistress of Arts was awarded to students completing the Scientific course and Mistress of Arts and Classical Literature to those completing the Classical course. Primary and preparatory departments were available to students not yet eligible for college entrance. The academic programs reflected the traditional emphases of American colleges before programs were altered by trends toward career preparation, elective courses, and the proliferation of extracurricular activities. Although young women attending Athens Female College received a traditional and demanding liberal arts education, the curriculum also included subjects considered particularly feminine--drawing, painting, embroidery, and vocal and instrumental music.

The 1860 catalog outlines the following courses of study:

#### **PRIMARY AND PREPARATORY DEPARTMENTS**

Orthography	English Grammar
Reading	History of the United States
Penmanship	Primary Natural Philosophy
Geography	Composition
	Arithmetic

## COLLEGIATE DEPARTMENT

### Scientific Course

Arithmetic	Physiology
Grammar	Rhetoric
Ancient history	Logic
Astronomy	Algebra
Natural Philosophy	Geometry
Chemistry	Mental philosophy
Botany	Moral science
Geology	

### Classical Course

Latin	Bullion's Latin Grammar Bullion's Latin Reader Caesar's Commentaries Virgil's Aeneid Cicero's Select Orations
Greek	Bullion's Greek Grammar Bullion's Greek Reader Greek Testament Xenophon
French	Pasquelle's Course Telemague Charles XII Life of Washington Corinne

Trigonometry  
Political economy  
Evidences of Christianity

Religious training received strong emphasis. Daily opening exercises included Bible reading and prayer. Students were required to attend public worship at least once every Sunday at the church designated by parents or guardians.

To protect the morals of its young charges, the college decreed that boarding students not be allowed to leave the campus for visiting with the exception of visits paid to close relatives. These young ladies were forbidden to correspond with gentlemen unless authorized to do so by parents or guardians. They were not allowed to

enter stores, necessary purchases being made for them by someone designated by the president.

Parents were advised to send their daughters to college outfitted with plain, practical clothing without “gaudy and costly decorations and jewelry.” Each article of clothing was to be distinctly labeled and should include “an umbrella, rubber over-shoes, and a thick shawl or cloak.”

Students who were not Athens residents could obtain room and board, including laundry, in the home of the president for \$2.50 per week or in the homes of local residents who accepted boarders.<sup>9</sup>

Enrollment figures for 1859 indicate 101 students, 66 in the college department, 17 in the preparatory, and 15 in the primary. Three other students were studying only music. Tennessee students predominated, with thirty-three college enrollees from McMinn County, twenty-nine from other Tennessee counties, and only four from other Southern states. The preparatory department had only one student living outside McMinn County, and the same was true of the primary school.<sup>10</sup>

Community support has been a major factor in the college’s survival through difficult challenges, and such support was evident in the institution’s early days. For example, in December 1858, a group of Athens women sponsored a supper and evening of musical entertainment in the Lecture Room of the college building. Tickets were sold for one dollar each, and after the meal and entertainment, home-baked cakes were auctioned. All proceeds were used for the purchase of seats for the Lecture Room.<sup>11</sup>

Editor Sam Ivins, in 1859, reported the college to be in a “flourishing condition” and the town to be “infested with the spirit of improvement.” However, war was eminent and would have enormous consequences for both Athens and Athens Female College. When war came, in April 1861, Tennessee reluctantly joined the Confederacy, but many Athens and McMinn County residents agreed with the majority of East Tennesseans in opposing secession.<sup>12</sup>

College records for the war period are extremely limited. An article appearing in the *Athens Post* of August 30, 1861, stated that the college would open for the Fall Session on September 9 and that every department would be led by “competent and experienced teachers.” The president’s home could accommodate as many as thirty young ladies who would be charged \$2.25 per week for room and board. Fees could be paid in money or “its equivalent.”<sup>13</sup>

Enrollment in 1861 was approximately eighty-five but dropped to about forty in 1862. Emory and Henry College, another Methodist institution sponsored by the Holston Conference, suspended operation in 1862 due to the number of students joining the army. Obviously, Athens Female College did not have this problem and continued to operate at least until 1863. The Athens newspaper of April 10, 1863, reported the college to be “nearly full to its capacity.” Editor Ivins noted that although the majority of young men were away fighting for freedom and independence, parents should not neglect the education of their daughters. This article contains the last



reference to the college found in an extant issue of the *Post*.<sup>14</sup>

With the absence of a newspaper or other records, one cannot know positively just what happened to Athens Female College during the later war years. R. N. Price, in his history of Holston Conference Methodism, states that the school's operation was suspended and the building used as a military hospital. Isaac Patton Martin, using Price as his source, notes that the college was closed during the war and the building used for "military purposes."<sup>15</sup>

It seems likely that the college did close in the fall of 1863. After the invasion of the area by Union forces, parents would have hesitated to send their daughters away from home. As to the claim that the college building was used as a hospital, this claim is a part of oral tradition, but no supporting documentation has been discovered other than the brief statement of Price, repeated by Martin.

College classes were still in session during the spring of 1863 while Confederates controlled the area. According to the *Athens Post*, a Confederate hospital was established "in the building on Academy Hill belonging to Col. Jo. McCalley which was tendered by that gentleman." This was the location of the Forest Hill Academy, not the college. When Union forces moved into the county, it seems plausible that they would have taken over the already-existing hospital. That the college building did serve as a hospital certainly remains a possibility, for large vacant buildings were often so used; if such were the case, the likelihood is that the hospital housed wounded Union soldiers rather than Confederates.<sup>16</sup>

More trouble came for Athens Female College near the end of the war when President Erastus Rowley filed a civil suit in the Chancery Court of McMinn County, claiming that the college owed him a substantial sum of money. Disillusioned with Southern Methodism, Rowley had shifted his allegiance to the Northern branch of the church and determined to leave the college after securing funds he alleged were owed to him.

According to Rowley, there were outstanding debts against the college when he took charge, and he had used his own means to settle the liability. He had bought with personal funds additional acreage and had financed building, repairs, and equipment for which he had not been reimbursed. Rowley requested that the court order college assets to be sold at public auction to satisfy his claims.

At its 1865 meeting, the Holston Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South asked that the college's trustees investigate Rowley's claims and appointed the Reverend C. Long and the Reverend James Atkins as representatives of the conference in the legal dispute.<sup>17</sup>

Testifying in court, spokesmen for the trustees acknowledged that the college had indebtedness when Rowley became president and that Rowley had spoken of providing some personal financing. They contended, however, that there was no written legal lien. Building, repairs, and equipment purchases, they said, were initiated by Rowley at his own insistence and without the sanction of the trustees.

The trustees were on the defensive as they admitted that they were aware of

certain "improvements" made to the campus but made no effort to stop Rowley's actions. They went on the offensive as they claimed that Rowley had lived rent-free in college housing for some eight years and had used his residence as a student boarding house without official trustee approval. Fees collected by Rowley from student boarders, they argued, would have more than paid for his expenditures. They then put forth the rather weak conclusion that instead of Rowley being the financial loser, he, in fact, owed money to the college.

Chancellor D. C. Trehwitt ruled in favor of Rowley and awarded him the sum of \$5,755.92. In order to raise this money, all college assets, including buildings, twelve acres of land, and furniture, were to be sold at public auction. The college was sold on September 6, 1866, to the Reverend Edwin A. Atlee, acting as agent for Rowley, for \$7,150, less than half its estimated value.<sup>18</sup>

Although some allowance must be made for the confusion of the Civil War period, it would seem that both President Rowley and the trustees were at fault in their management of college affairs. Rowley assumed too much individual authority without the specific approval of the trustees, but the trustees seem to have been well aware of the president's actions and did nothing to deter him.

It is interesting to note that President Rowley, a northerner, owned nine slaves, six females and three males (all mulattoes) while in Athens. Presumably, the slaves were used to perform manual and domestic work on campus. The female slaves were used as domestic servants in the president's home where as many as thirty students were provided room and board. Rowley left Athens to become president of DePaul College in New Albany, Indiana, in 1865.

Thus Athens Female College came to an ignoble end after only a few years of existence. But Erastus Rowley had plans for the sale of the property, and the story continues.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE WINDS OF CHANGE: 1867-1886



**“Encircled from our second birth  
with all the heavenly powers.”**

*- Charles Wesley*

As Union forces triumphed, East Tennessee Methodists who supported the Union reorganized to establish the Holston Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, a branch of northern Methodism. Meeting in 1866, this group expressed strong interest in the establishment of an educational institution. Erastus Rowley seized this opportunity to unload the property acquired through his lawsuit and offered to sell this property to the newly formed Holston Conference. His asking price was the sum he had received in settlement of the suit, approximately six thousand dollars. The Conference eagerly accepted his offer and thus acquired assets worth at least twenty thousand dollars. The property was transferred in 1867 and designated “for the use and behalf of the Holston Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.”<sup>1</sup>

During an interim period, the early months of 1867, a school with mostly preparatory students operated under the principalship of Professor Percival C. Wilson. Although this school eventually enrolled eighty-five students, it apparently had a slow beginning since during the first week Professor Wilson gave instruction to only one student, a Miss Cornelia Atlee.<sup>2</sup>

When the new institution was chartered by the Tennessee General Assembly, in March 1867, it was described as “a first class college for males” and given the name East Tennessee Wesleyan College, in honor of the founder of Methodism. After operating for one year as a college for males, the institution became co-educational in 1868 and changed its name to East Tennessee Wesleyan University. It should be noted that East Tennessee Wesleyan was a pioneer in co-education, for at this time very few colleges accepted as students both women and men.

Serving as president from 1867 to 1872 was the Reverend Nelson E. Cobleigh, a native of New Hampshire. Educated at Wesleyan University in Middletown,

Connecticut, Cobleigh had served as Professor of Ancient Languages in two colleges, as the president of McKendree College in Illinois, and as editor of *Zion's Herald* in Boston. He resigned his editorial position to become president of East Tennessee Wesleyan.

President Cobleigh received the strong support of the Holston Conference, the members of which passed a resolution pledging themselves "individually and collectively" to the task of "building up, sustaining and endowing" the school they had established. They also agreed to oppose the opening of any similar school within the bounds of the Holston Conference.<sup>3</sup>

Enrollment in 1867 reached 120; and the school year was described as "prosperous and successful." In September 1868, only seventy students appeared when classes began, but some fifty-five others straggled in during the next two months, several having been delayed due to their teaching duties in their neighborhood schools.<sup>4</sup>

The only admission requirement listed in the 1869-70 catalog was that the student present "evidence of good moral character." Examinations determined each student's placement in either the preparatory department, which had the larger enrollment, or in the advanced university classes.

Two members of the 1869 faculty held the title of Professor, President Cobleigh, teacher of moral and intellectual science, and Professor James C. Barb, teacher of natural science and librarian. Other faculty members included:

Rev. John J. Manker  
Tutor and Instructor in Greek Language and Literature

W. E. F. Milburn  
Tutor in Mathematics

Miss Margarita M. Hauschild  
Preceptress and Teacher in Academic Department

Miss Helen Bosworth  
Teacher of Instrumental Music

Miss M. F. Bosworth  
Teacher in Preparatory Department

John H. Moore  
Assistant Librarian

University students, receiving the liberal arts education typical of nineteenth-century colleges, could elect to pursue either the Classical course of study or the Scientific. The Classical course placed heavy emphasis on Latin and Greek but also included

mathematics, rhetoric, logic, botany, and natural science. The Scientific course did not require Latin and Greek and gave greater attention to the sciences and mathematics. Both courses required four years of study which was unusual at that time. As late as 1913, only seven colleges or universities in the South required four years of residence. While characteristic of the college's tradition of thoroughness in education, this requirement placed East Tennessee Wesleyan at some disadvantage in terms of enrollment since students could graduate from a number of other area schools in fewer than four years.<sup>5</sup>

Tuition for university students was twenty-one dollars or twenty-three dollars per term, depending upon the curriculum chosen, while preparatory students paid only eight dollars per term. All students were charged two dollars for "incidental fees." Lodging and board were available in several Athens homes, usually for three dollars per week.

All classes were held in the Main College Building which also housed a chapel, a library, the president's office, and a meeting room used by the literary societies and for other gatherings.

Three literary societies had been formed by 1869, the Athenian and the Philomathean for men and the Adelphean for women. The weekly meetings of these societies were devoted to programs including such activities as debates, poetry recitations, musical performances, and the reading of original essays. There was also a theological society with its own library of over three hundred volumes.

Social contacts were largely limited to the meetings of these societies, and students probably looked forward to the fall revival meeting, held by local pastors, as another social outlet.

Financial difficulties, the college's perennial bugaboo, were evident as early as 1869. Indebtedness had reached \$2,778, most of this owed to the faculty. At its fall meeting, the Holston Conference passed a resolution urging ministers to present the plight of the university to their congregations. Each minister was asked to raise a minimum of ten dollars, to be forwarded to the university's treasurer, James H. Hornsby, and to recruit at least one additional student.<sup>6</sup>

In 1870, the Holston Conference Educational Committee, chaired by President Cobleigh, again called attention to the university's financial needs. The committee's report highlighted the institution's success during 1869-70, stating that enrollment was up, the "standard of scholarship" as high and as thorough as that of any institution in the land, and the general deportment and moral character of the students "surpassed by none in this country." However, the report stated, financial conditions were such that, if allowed to continue, in a short time the university would become extinct. Expenses for the current academic year were estimated to be \$4,050 while anticipated income from tuition was only \$3,000. This deficit of over a thousand dollars must be added to previous indebtedness of \$2,748, swelling the total to almost \$4,000. The urgency of the financial situation resulted in the conference's appointment of a special committee to recommend a plan by which the school could remain



solvent. The committee's reported plan required each Holston Conference minister to hold one service per year focusing on support of the institution both through financial contributions and through enrolling of sons and daughters and other young church members. Each district of the conference was assigned a sum to be raised.

Despite these efforts and a slight increase in tuition, the financial situation showed no improvement. Total indebtedness at the end of the 1871-72 academic year was estimated at \$4,500. The conference appointed R. D. Black to act as an agent responsible for soliciting funds throughout the Holston Conference.

In spite of the growing indebtedness, the trustees authorized the addition of a new department of theology and asked President Cobleigh to devote most of his attention to building this department which had as its chief aim the preparation of young men for the ministry. In the same year the conference's education committee authorized still another department, law, which was to be directed by the Honorable N. A. Patterson.<sup>8</sup>

The first graduating class, in 1871, had ten members: Edwin Augustus Atlee, John Henry Clay Foster, Joseph Leander Gaston, Wiley S. Gaston, Josephine Gaston Hale, Cornelia Atlee Hutsell, John Jenkins Manker, William Elbert Franklin Milburn, Susan Lizzie Moore, and Mary J. Mason Presnell.

The fall of 1871 marked the entrance of a student who was to acquire a prominent place in Tennessee history. The father of Robert Love Taylor had become the minister of the Athens Station of the Methodist Episcopal Church and had moved his family to Athens. Robert ("Bob") Taylor, a student from 1871 to 1873, went on to serve two terms as United States congressman and three terms as Tennessee governor. He is particularly remembered for his role in perhaps the most colorful political race in United States history. In this 1886 contest, which gained national attention and became known as Tennessee's War of the Roses, Bob ran for governor as a Democrat against his brother Alf, a Republican. The two traveled together and staged forty-one debates all over the state of Tennessee, occasions marked not only by eloquent oratory but by abundant wisecracking and lively fiddle playing by both brothers. Bob won the race and was twice re-elected, and Alf later attained the governorship for one term.

While at East Tennessee Wesleyan, Bob was a member of the Philomathean literary society and their star debater. He also was the author of a short comic play "Horatio Spriggins" in which he played the title role. His classmates delighted in his wit and in his oratorical and dramatic skills which were to enthrall a much wider audience in years to come.

In the year following Bob Taylor's matriculation, 1872, the trustees approved the provision of free tuition for any ministerial student in need of assistance. Doubtless such generosity gained approval from conference ministers and their congregations and was a positive action in terms of public relations. However, it further aggravated financial problems already in existence.<sup>9</sup>

A graduate of 1872, David Bolton, became a leading figure in the school's history.

The date of his graduation was also the date of his marriage to Ann Elizabeth Hornsby, and he settled in Athens to become a faculty member and administrator, serving his alma mater for fifty-two years.

President Cobleigh, in 1872, accepted the editorship of the *Methodist Advocate*, published in Atlanta. He had served East Tennessee Wesleyan for five years and had been diligent in his desire to strengthen its academic program. In addition to his administrative duties, Cobleigh also taught classes in Greek, Latin, history, rhetoric, ethics and psychology. David Bolton wrote in appreciation of Cobleigh as a "great teacher and ripe scholar." Cobleigh was noted for his demanding assignments and told his students, "Young men, if you can endure the pressure now you need not fear work that may come to you later." Widely praised as an outstanding minister, teacher, and scholar, Cobleigh died in 1874, two years after his departure from Athens.<sup>10</sup>

Trustees selected the Reverend James A. Dean as Cobleigh's successor. A native of Vermont and educated at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, Dean began his presidency of East Tennessee Wesleyan in 1873. In 1875, he resigned to return to the pastoral ministry in New York and was later elected president of New Orleans University.

Probably a strong factor in Dean's short tenure was the university's continuing and growing indebtedness. Known for his "accurate scholarship and habits of study," Dean was perhaps ill prepared to deal with the institution's financial problems which had been exacerbated by the nation's economic panic of 1873. Although his presidency was brief, Dean left behind a weighty and lasting memento. In 1872, a college bell, weighing 321 pounds, was acquired from the McNeely Bell Company of New York and placed atop the Main College Building.

Although student enrollment increased in 1873, a debt of nearly \$4,000 stubbornly remained. Anticipated expenditures for needed improvements and repairs would increase the amount to \$5,000. A generous donor offered to contribute half the sum if the remainder could be supplied by the conference. Once again the Holston Conference turned to its ministers, asking them to raise about \$2,000 which, added to the donation, would place the university on "a footing where it probably would need no pecuniary aid." Apparently this plea was unsuccessful since, in September 1875, the Holston Conference reported that East Tennessee Wesleyan had been required to execute a Deed of Trust in the amount of \$5,000. During this period, times were hard throughout the nation but especially in the South which still suffered from the economic devastation of the Civil War. Resources from outside the South were urgently needed but were not yet forthcoming.<sup>11</sup>

The Reverend John J. Manker was appointed, in June 1875, to succeed James Dean as president. Manker had graduated from East Tennessee Wesleyan in its first graduating class of 1871 and had received the Master of Arts degree from Ohio Wesleyan in 1874. He served as president from June to October, but announced at the October session of the Holston Conference that he preferred to remain in the pastoral ministry and in teaching. Although his term as president was very brief, John



J. Manker continued a connection with the institution. During his distinguished career he served as minister of several large churches, as a professor at East Tennessee Wesleyan, Chattanooga University, and Grant University and as editor of the *Methodist Advocate Journal*. In recognition of his accomplishments, the University of Tennessee awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1883.

The years 1872-1875 saw two presidents come and go, but the next appointee, the Reverend John Fletcher Spence, was to be a strong and stabilizing influence for eighteen years. After serving as a minister in Ohio and as an army chaplain, Spence settled in Knoxville, became secretary of the newly organized Holston Conference, held the presidency of Knoxville Female Institute for three years, and served for three years as presiding elder of the Knoxville District of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Before his appointment to the presidency in 1875, Spence had already devoted considerable time and effort to the support of East Tennessee Wesleyan, serving as trustee, financial secretary, and field agent. In the latter position, he had traveled to the North where he had contacts and where he secured contributions for the university.

The selection of Spence as president was indeed a wise move. During the first few years of his tenure, odds were heavily against him because of the institution's low enrollment and financial indebtedness. Spence increased enrollment by traveling into mountainous regions of the South, urging the importance of education, and was a successful fundraiser, particularly in the North. In a speech given in Troy, New York, he solicited aid with the plea, "The close of the Civil War saw such poverties as never before known. The poor became poorer and the ignorant more ignorant. We are training the illiterate, non-slave holding portion of the South for the leaders of the future." Such stress on the poverty and ignorance found among young people of the South may have seemed condescending and demeaning to those young people and their families, but the strategy worked. In October 1876, it was announced that the school's entire indebtedness had been liquidated with additional funds remaining for repairs and equipment. A report from the conference's education committee waxed eloquent on the subject:

The East Tennessee Wesleyan University is the child of the Conference; born in 1867. Scarcely ten years of age; has been feeble most of her life; came nigh unto death one year ago, has recovered; is now convalescent, has received a new suit of clothes from her friends in the North—in this new dress and hearty state she presents herself before her mother this day, claiming recognition, love, and attention."

An 1880 report of the Holston Conference Education Committee stated that although income from tuition remained inadequate to support the university, supplementary income had been received from "donations and collections from churches and friends in the North."<sup>12</sup>

An unexpected windfall of 1878 promised additional financial support, but the promise was unfulfilled. Colonel H. G. Bixby of California offered the university an

interest in eight silver mines near Globe City, Arizona. An excited President Spence arranged for the construction of a mill for mine operation at the cost of \$40,000. The Holston Conference expressed gratitude to Colonel Bixby for his "munificent gift" and expected sizeable annual dividends. A year later, conference minutes reported that "the trustees are not realizing on the Arizona mineral interest as soon as was anticipated; nevertheless, it is full of promise, and all are confident of success in the future." Such optimism proved unjustified, for records show no further reference to Colonel Bixby's gift or to any income received from the silver mines. President Spence, remarkably resilient, apparently accepted this disappointment with good grace and continued his efforts toward financial security and student recruitment.<sup>13</sup>

When Spence took office, eighty-six students were enrolled. A serious hindrance to recruitment was the postwar economic plight of the South. Many families simply lacked the funds required to educate their sons and daughters. Recognizing this problem, Spence persuaded the trustees to eliminate tuition completely in 1880, charging each student only an incidental fee of five dollars per term. This free tuition system continued at least until 1884. As has been noted, Spence traveled throughout the region, urging the importance of education for the betterment of the area's youth, and continued to seek financial support for his cause from churches and individuals. Due largely to Spence's hard work and persistence, enrollment rose to 330 during his tenure.<sup>14</sup>

As enrollment increased, the one college building proved inadequate. This building was used for classrooms, offices, and library, as the meeting place for the literary societies and, during the early part of President Spence's tenure, as the president's sleeping quarters. During this period, Spence wrote, planned, taught classes, and slept in the same northwest room on the building's second floor. The college building also served as the place of worship for the congregation of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This congregation, in 1867, had taken over the building of the Athens Methodist Episcopal Church, South, but lost in their bid to claim ownership in 1871 when the Circuit Court of McMinn County ruled that the "church building and property be surrendered immediately to the Methodist Church, South." President Spence invited the congregation to conduct services on the third floor of the college building. When a college chapel was constructed, through a cooperative agreement between college and church, the congregation met in this chapel until 1909. At that time a newly constructed church building on the corner of Jackson and College Streets provided a meeting place. The church, renamed Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, then sold its interest in the chapel to the college but, in its new location, remained the campus church.<sup>15</sup>

The college chapel, erected in 1882, on the present site of Townsend Hall, provided not only a place for the required daily worship of students and faculty but furnished another venue for recitals, lectures, commencement exercises, and literary society programs.

In the same year as the chapel's construction, 1882, indebtedness again reared its

ugly head. In response to an accumulated debt of \$3,000, President Spence generously offered to donate \$2,500 if the trustees could provide \$500. Not surprisingly, his offer was accepted, and the trustees reported "with gladness" that the institution was again entirely free of debt.<sup>16</sup>

As enrollment increased, the need for adequate student housing was recognized, and Hatfield Hall, a dormitory for men, was built in 1884. Prior to this time, students were responsible for finding their own living quarters, and this necessity continued for many students since Hatfield Hall accommodated only forty males. The school provided a few sparsely furnished cottages in which students could share a room by paying \$1.50 per term and where they could prepare their own meals. Several private homes accepted students, some furnishing both room and board and others offering rooms where students either did their own cooking or took their meals elsewhere. Students who lived close enough to the university could go home on weekends and often brought back enough food to sustain them for the following week.

James A. Fowler, an 1884 graduate, gives a glimpse of how students dealt with the housing situation. He arrived by train on a Saturday in late August 1882 and was met at the Athens depot by Professor David Bolton who invited him to stay at the Bolton home until he could seek housing on the following Monday. Fowler and five other boys were able to rent an unoccupied house near the campus. The young men consolidated expenses, hired a "colored" woman to serve as cook and housekeeper, and elected a member of their group to act as purchasing agent for groceries and other needed supplies. This arrangement worked well for a while, but when two more students joined the six, conditions became overcrowded, and Fowler and his friend Charlie Jennings sought other housing, renting a room downtown over Robinson's Store. Here the upstairs area had been partitioned into small, unfurnished rooms for students. Fowler and Jennings purchased minimal used furniture consisting of a bedstead, a straw tick mattress, two pillows, two chairs, and a small wood stove, all obtained for approximately eight dollars. They took their meals with a Mrs. Cook, a widow who supported herself and daughter by renting rooms and supplying meals both for her roomers and for other students. Boarders paid Mrs. Cook six dollars per month. Fowler estimated his total expenses for his first university year to be about \$125.<sup>17</sup>

Professor David Bolton had arrived at the university as a student in 1869 and found lodging in the home of William Howard, a house adjacent to the Cedar Grove Cemetery. He and his two roommates also took their meals with the Howard family. Bolton later obtained room and board in the home of Mrs. Edwin A. Atlee. After his graduation and marriage, Bolton and his "good and faithful wife" furnished board and lodging to students and teachers.<sup>18</sup>

While administrators and trustees struggled with financial problems, what were students doing other than seeking room and board? They were expected to be studying, and indeed they were. Under the leadership of President Spence, the curriculum had been strengthened to provide three courses of study: Classical, Latin Scientific,

and Scientific. The chief distinction between Classical and Latin Scientific was that the former included the study of Greek. To ensure that students gave proper concentration to a demanding curriculum, three evening hours were designated as a study period, and all students, whether residing on campus or in town, were required to be studying in their rooms during this time. Faculty members periodically made unannounced visits to ensure that the rule was followed.

In general, students seem to have been serious scholars, assiduously pursuing their studies. James A. Fowler describes the student body of his time as follows: "If judged by their dress and personal appearance, they would not have been regarded very highly, but if those students were judged by their zeal in applying to their studies and their ability to master them, and their ambition to qualify themselves for a successful and useful life, they would rank very high." Fowler's own financial situation was such that he determined to complete degree requirements within two years. Carrying a heavy class load, he rose at 4:00 a.m., attended a full day of classes, and studied during the evening until the required "lights out" at 10:00 p.m.<sup>19</sup>

Obviously, extracurricular activities were limited, but literary societies afforded some opportunity for students to gather in a setting other than the classroom. The Athenian and Philomathean societies for men had been organized in 1867 and 1868. The Adelphean for women is mentioned in early catalogs but must have met its demise about 1874. Records show that a new society, the Sapphonian, was organized in the winter of 1878-79, on the request of "ladies who felt that they were without the literary advantages which the existing societies furnish to the young gentlemen."<sup>20</sup>

The literary societies met weekly, and each had a small library. Since their purpose was to develop literary taste as well as ease and grace of expression, at their regular meetings members engaged in debate, declamation, and the reading of essays, usually on literary subjects. An annual public entertainment by each society required careful preparation and consisted of music, recitations, and sometimes a short play.

Literary societies were supervised closely by the faculty and were required to follow a rather rigid set of rules. Almost every faculty meeting involved ruling on a request from one or more of the societies. For example, in 1869, the Athenian group asked permission to arrange a debate with students of the Riceville Academy, a request denied by the faculty. Always mindful that study should be every student's primary concern, the faculty was careful to emphasize that other activities were secondary. A resolution by the faculty in 1869 read: "Resolved: In order to properly guard the scholarship and standing of the students of this institution, we deem it improper to excuse anyone from the regular college duties for the purpose of preparing for any duty connected with the literary societies."<sup>21</sup>

Several faculty members were ministers, and all were conscious of the need for church approval. When the Athenians asked permission to hold a public theatrical performance to raise funds to supply furnishings for their meeting place, permission was denied. The faculty's explanation stated: "In view of the moral aspect of the case as viewed not only by the Methodist Episcopal Church but by almost all religious



denominations, it would not, in our judgement, be considered within the character and intent of the institution to permit a public performance of the character intended." In time the distrust of "playacting" diminished, for nine years later, in 1879, the literary societies were allowed to give a theatrical performance to raise funds for recarpeting the Literary Hall and the stage of the chapel, both located on the third floor of the college building.<sup>22</sup>

A literary society meeting was not open to members of other societies, doubtless a rule at least partially motivated by the fear of allowing unsupervised contact between men and women. When it was learned that some societies had permitted such visitation, Professor Bolton was instructed to review rules applicable to literary societies by reading them aloud during a chapel service. Violation of the no-visitation rule resulted in each offender receiving ten demerits. Faculty members were assigned to visit literary society meetings to detect and report violators.<sup>23</sup>

Literary societies had their own rules governing their members who were expected to "perform their duties." The Athenian society, in 1882, apparently had a problem with one member, George Gaines. The society's minutes record the fining of George for "nonperformance of duty," the fine being ten cents. On several other occasions this same George was absent (fine ten cents) or tardy (fine five cents). Always there are the nonconformers who tend to enliven the academic routine!<sup>24</sup>

In addition to rules governing literary societies, rules concerning individual student behavior were devised and monitored by the faculty. Such rules existed from the college's beginnings and included bans on consumption of alcoholic beverages, card playing, and attendance at "dancing parties, circuses, and operatic shows." Shortly after Spence assumed the presidency, he advocated the adoption of a more elaborate code.<sup>25</sup>

## **CODE OF RULES FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF PUPILS CONNECTED WITH EAST TENNESSEE WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY**

**Every student is required to give satisfactory evidence of good moral character before being admitted.**

**It shall be the duty of each student to attend Sabbath School and morning service of public worship each Sabbath at such place as student may select or as faculty understand preference of parent or guardian.**

**All students are required to study during such hours and in such places as the faculty may announce for that purpose.**

Students are not to absent selves from the University except by permission from faculty, nor absent selves from recitation or study rooms assigned except by permission of teachers of recitation.

All delinquencies are registered and those absent from chapel services will render excuses to Secretary of faculty in writing, and for all other delinquencies students will render either written or verbal excuses to the faculty or respective teacher within ten days.

Students are not to absent selves from exams.

No student is allowed to carry about his person deadly weapons of any kind, and anyone doing so, or attempting to use the same upon another, shall be liable to suspension or expulsion.

The use or the causing to use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage is forbidden upon pain of expulsion.

Boisterousness or unnecessary noise or the use of tobacco anywhere or in any way, in or about the college building, or the carrying about the person of explosives of any kind or their use is forbidden.

Use of profane or indecent language either spoken or written is forbidden.

Abuse of any other person or property is forbidden.

Loitering about the streets or any place of public business; contracting debts except by permission from parent or guardian; visiting saloons; attending parties which directly or indirectly have a tendency to disturb habits of study; or keeping late hours at night—are strictly forbidden and any pupil violating these rules shall be liable to such penalty as faculty may attach.

Courting, or escorting to and from any of the regular exercises of the school or written communications between the male and female members of the school are each and all strictly forbidden.<sup>26</sup>

Not surprisingly, this last rule mandating separation of males from females was difficult to enforce, and occasional exceptions were made for lectures, entertainments by literary societies, and commencement exercises. James A. Fowler admits unashamedly that he “habitually” violated this rule but was not discovered until his last year when he was caught three times. “I never had any idea who the Professor was who so diligently kept watch upon me,” he wrote. For each offense five demerits were given.

Some other violations earning five demerits were absence from recitation, absence from chapel, and absence from church. Greater offenses, receiving ten demerits, included smoking and leaving town without permission. A student was called before the dean for fifteen demerits and must appear before the entire faculty for twenty-five demerits. A student's parent or guardian was notified of thirty-five demerits, and fifty demerits resulted in suspension or dismissal.<sup>27</sup>

Students were given demerits for such violations as attending a party without permission, buggy-riding, and a host of other sins. The annual fair in Sweetwater presented a huge temptation to which even President Spence's son succumbed, thereby receiving ten demerits.<sup>28</sup>

The no-drinking rule also produced a number of offenders. A consumer of alcohol was either dismissed from the university, especially if he had previously violated the rule, or was allowed to remain after signing a confession of guilt and expression of remorse which was read to the student body assembled in chapel. Drinking often led to the breaking of other rules as was the case of three students appearing before the faculty in 1872. These offenders confessed to being absent from their rooms without permission, indeed being out after midnight. Their revelry had included visiting the vicinity of the depot and "one or two saloons." Their plea for forgiveness and promise of reformation resulted in the faculty's decision, after due deliberation, to "bear with the delinquents at this time."<sup>29</sup>

Violation of the rule against alcohol rarely received such lenient treatment. The notation "suspended for drunkenness, his father notified" appears periodically in faculty minutes. Sometimes a student left voluntarily, refusing to sign the required confession to be read to his fellow students. Since faculty members had strong principles but not hearts of stone, they sometimes readmitted an expelled offender, often in response to the plea of a concerned parent. A promise of appropriate future behavior was, of course, required.

In 1885, the Holston Conference reported another year of university prosperity, a five-year average enrollment of 250, and the purchase of "the Wilson property" which consisted of two acres and an eight-room building to be used as a boarding house for young ladies. According to the report, the campus now consisted of eighteen acres and six buildings and had the capacity to accommodate four hundred students.<sup>30</sup>

With an expanding campus and a strong academic program and with a student body which was studious but not without youthful high spirits, East Tennessee Wesleyan University was moving forward in 1886. In this same year, President Spence saw an opportunity to honor a man whom he admired and, perhaps more importantly, to increase support from the North. The school was renamed Grant Memorial University, which brings us to a new era—and another chapter.



## CHAPTER 3

### A LIVING MONUMENT: 1886-1898



**“O for a faith like his that we the  
bright example may pursue!”**

*- Charles Wesley*

A connection of East Tennessee Wesleyan with Ulysses S. Grant had been established in 1867, shortly before the Union general became President of the United States. At this time, Grant had been solicited by John F. Spence to make a contribution toward the establishment of a school to be operated by the Holston Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Grant responded with a cash donation accompanied by the statement, “I want to help the class of people for which the school is being established, for I believe a Christian education among the masses in the Central South is now a necessity.” Spence was thus able to designate Grant as the first contributor to East Tennessee Wesleyan.<sup>1</sup>

Grant died in 1885, and Spence claimed to have had a dream in which Grant appeared to him, presented him with a razor, and urged him to cut his way through all difficulties. Seeing Grant’s popularity in the North as a source of support, Spence announced his plan to make the Athens institution a “living monument” to “the greatest of Generals.” In promotional material sent to prospective supporters, Spence eulogized Grant as a man of “exalted character” and appealed for donations “in the name of 750,000 white men living South of Mason and Dixon’s line that cannot read the ballots they cast, and on behalf of 3,000,000 more of whites in the same territory, over ten years of age, groping in the darkness of intellectual illiteracy.” Spence’s emphasis on the school’s mission to *white* students would later be significant.<sup>2</sup>

The *New York Christian Advocate* approved the name change, stating that numerous institutions had “Wesleyan” as part of their title, that others were named for presidents, but that none was named for Grant who “died in such general esteem and love that the name has a national and not a sectional aspect.”<sup>3</sup>

While Spence expected the strongest support from the North, some publications of the South also endorsed the name change. For example, the *Knoxville Daily*

*Chronicle* wrote of the “fitting tribute” to a man “whose memory of valor and stainless faith is the proud heritage of every American citizen.” *The Knoxville Daily Journal* concurred and wrote glowingly of the Athens location as an appropriate site for a memorial to Grant stating: “For beauty of scenery and healthy location it cannot be surpassed.” Chattanooga publications apparently were silent for a reason that will become evident.<sup>4</sup>

Spence advised potential supporters that the university had assets valued at \$50,000, that the average annual enrollment for the past five years had been 250, and that the school had enjoyed great success in the education of “young people in moderate circumstances.” His hope was not only to strengthen present departments but to add an industrial school which would give training in such areas as agriculture, carpentry, and machinery.

Spence’s acquaintances in Washington, D.C., helped him to secure a congressional endorsement, and twenty-three senators and representatives signed a document praising the institution. This endorsement noted that the school had “already accomplished a great work in training thousands of the youths of the South for usefulness and leadership among the masses” and had now become “a living and durable monument to the name of the greatest of American soldiers.”<sup>5</sup>

Spence saw the sixty-fourth anniversary of Grant’s birth, April 27, 1886, as a special opportunity to publicize the university under the new name. At a celebration held at the Metropolitan Church in Washington, D.C., several prominent figures spoke in praise of both Grant and of the school which now bore his name. Speakers included John D. Long, former governor of Massachusetts; Senator Joseph E. Brown of Georgia; Senator William M. Evarts of New York; and Senator John Sherman of Ohio. S. S. Burdett, Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, unable to attend, sent a letter praising Grant’s “great work for his country” and endorsing “the educational institution which, planted in the South, has taken his loved name.”<sup>6</sup>

Indefatigable in his efforts to build a successful university, President Spence had succeeded in adding important names to his list of supporters and expected greater returns from fundraising in the North. Grant Memorial never attained the status of Harvard, Yale, Oberlin, or Cornell, mentioned by Commander Burdett as other great schools bearing honored names, but considerable progress was evident. The Holston Conference Education Committee, in 1888, reported the institution to be “more prosperous than ever.” All indebtedness had been eliminated, endowment had reached approximately \$100,000, and library holdings had grown to over 4,000 volumes. Enrollment was growing, with twenty-one states represented in the student body of 1888, and the faculty had increased to nineteen members.<sup>7</sup>

In 1889, Grant Memorial University merged with Chattanooga University to become a single institution with two campuses, and in 1892, the name was changed to U. S. Grant University. This consolidation led to a series of conflicts which ultimately threatened the very existence of the Athens school.

In order to trace the history of an uneasy alliance, it becomes necessary to break

chronological order and go back to 1872. Even before this date, Methodist church leaders had discussed the feasibility of establishing in the Central South a single university which would serve as the official educational institution for the following conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church: Holston, Central Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Blue Ridge, and Virginia. Proponents of this idea were convinced that the channeling of students and funds from six conferences into one mutually supported institution would result in a stronger, more efficiently operated university than could be achieved by a single conference. Representatives of these conferences met in Knoxville in September 1872 and recommended the establishment of a central university.

The Holston Conference, at its annual October meeting, approved the idea. In accordance with a recommendation coming from the Knoxville meeting, three Holston Conference members were selected to meet with representatives from other conferences "to either agree upon an institution already founded, or locate, name, and procure a charter for a new one." John Spence, then president of Knoxville Female College and trustee of East Tennessee Wesleyan, was one of the delegates chosen. Presumably Spence and other Holston Conference representatives hoped that the central university would be located in Athens, thereby strengthening the institution already in existence. If such was their hope, they met with disappointment.<sup>8</sup>

After the assembled representatives chose a committee to recommend a location, committee members reported Knoxville, Chattanooga, and Athens as their top choices and asked these three cities to present indications of their interest. Citizens of Knoxville pledged \$50,000 and 40 acres of land which topped amounts pledged by Chattanooga and Athens.<sup>9</sup>

Knoxville University was chartered in 1873, land having been acquired and trustees elected. However, funds failed to meet amounts pledged, doubtless in part due to the economic panic of 1873. The presence in Knoxville of the University of Tennessee also may have reduced the chance of another university prospering there. After unsuccessful attempts by trustees to solicit additional funds, plans for Knoxville University were abandoned.<sup>10</sup>

Spence became president of East Tennessee Wesleyan in 1875 and used his considerable influence to urge the Holston Conference to give support to the Athens school as the central university. Meeting in 1879, the Holston Conference approved a resolution "to encourage no other institution of collegiate grade" and called on other conferences to unite in support "thus unifying our denominational educational work among the whites in this country."<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, residents of Chattanooga had not given up hope of the establishment of a central university in that city. Leading the advocates of the Chattanooga location was the Reverend John J. Manker, formerly a student and teacher at East Tennessee Wesleyan and, very briefly, its president. Manker had become the minister of the First Methodist Church in Chattanooga and urged its affluent members to support his efforts toward the establishment of a university in Chattanooga. He also sought the

assistance of Bishop Henry W. Warren of Atlanta and of Dr. Richard Rust, founder of the Freedmen's Aid Society as well as its secretary and chief operating officer.

The Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, headquartered in Cincinnati, had been formed in 1866 to promote education in the South. As its name suggests, the society was founded for the primary purpose of providing educational opportunities to blacks freed from slavery and to their descendants. During the first thirteen years of its existence, the society had given \$893,918 to this cause. Concern arose within the church that white southerners were being neglected, and, in 1880, delegates to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church approved the society's support of schools for whites while continuing to work toward the advancement of education for blacks. This decision prompted the Freedmen's Aid Society to consider more seriously the request for aid toward the establishment of Chattanooga University.

In the spring of 1882, President Spence called for an Educational Conference to meet at East Tennessee Wesleyan with representatives from each of the six Methodist conferences of the Central South. Delegates agreed on the establishment and maintenance of preparatory schools within the conferences. Public high schools were lacking, and preparatory schools were necessary to supply qualified students to the university. Use of the same textbooks in all preparatory schools, assuring uniformity of instruction, was also approved. The delegates then unanimously approved support of "one central university for white work in the territory lying east of the Mississippi River." All was going smoothly, or so it seemed.

Controversy erupted when John J. Manker requested the naming of a committee to select three possible sites for the university with the Freedman's Aid Society to make the final decision on location. Immediately, President Spence was on his feet, objecting to giving the society the ultimate choice because it was "prejudiced in favor of Chattanooga." The committee of representatives from participating conferences, he argued, would be in a better position to make the selection. Delegates, however, favored Manker's proposal, and the Freedman's Aid Society was authorized to make the final site selection.<sup>12</sup>

As the convention closed, Dr. Richard Rust, representing the Freedmen's Aid Society, attempted to calm troubled waters by urging all delegates to continue support of East Tennessee Wesleyan. The University in Athens, he said, was still the central university and, quite possibly, would continue in that capacity at its present location.<sup>13</sup>

At its October meeting, the Holston Conference approved the decision concerning site selection, changing its previous position and adopting the following resolution:

Resolved: That it is the desire of the Holston Conference that the question of location go to the committee on that subject altogether untrammelled and unembarrassed, and we do therefore hereby cancel and recall all former expression of preference made by the conference.<sup>14</sup>



Five representatives of the Holston Conference named to serve on the joint committee for site selection were: J. W. Mann, John J. Manker, John F. Spence, T. S. Walker, and R. N. Price.

Actually any committee recommendation seemed a mere formality. When the sixteen-member committee was convened in February 1883, at the call of Bishop Warren, only eight were present. Not surprisingly, Chattanooga was named as first choice, followed by Knoxville and Athens. When the committee's recommendation was forwarded to the Freedman's Aid Society, Chattanooga was unanimously approved, again not surprisingly.

Disappointment was keenly felt in Athens. East Tennessee Wesleyan had been in operation for sixteen years and was making progress. President Spence and others felt that they had been led to believe, both by the Holston Conference and by spokesmen for the Freedmen's Aid Society, that Athens would remain the site of the central university. Some loss of financial support from the church, as well as decrease in enrollment, was anticipated. Just three years later, Spence recommended the name change to Grant Memorial in the hope of increasing support from another sector, the northern states.

In Chattanooga, a location was chosen for the university and thirteen acres purchased by the Freedmen's Aid Society. Ground was broken early in 1884. Actual construction did not take place until more than a year later, but by the spring of 1886, a four-story structure was completed. This huge building contained offices, classrooms, laboratories, library, dining hall and kitchen, along with thirty-nine dormitory rooms for students and apartments for faculty. The Freedman's Aid Society accepted most of the responsibility for building, furnishing, and equipping the hall although Chattanoogaans contributed a sizeable amount.

A board of trustees was elected to direct daily operations, but the university was owned and operated by the Freedmen's Aid Society. As representative of this organization, Dr. Richard Rust undertook hiring of faculty and administrators. Named as acting president was the Reverend Edward S. Lewis who had served as president of Little Rock University, another school operated by the society. Six faculty members were appointed with John J. Manker to act as dean of theology, the most influential position other than that of president.

Chattanooga University opened in the fall of 1886 with an enrollment of 118 which within five weeks grew to 175. Enrollment figures were encouraging, but the university immediately encountered its first major difficulty. Among students seeking admission were two young black men.

Dean Manker explained to the prospective black students that the school could not admit them in spite of its connection with the Freedmen's Aid Society. They were encouraged to withdraw their applications and apply to the society for scholarships to a school in Atlanta. Quietly but firmly, they refused. A week later three black women applied for admission to Grant Memorial in Athens. Apparently, they were more eas-

ily persuaded to withdraw since that school did not receive its major support from the Freedmen's Aid Society.

Chattanooga University hoped to keep private its policy of racial discrimination, but such was not the case. Adding to the problem was an episode involving Professor Wilford Caulkins. Caulkins had been a member of East Tennessee Wesleyan's faculty and was now Professor of Ancient Languages in Chattanooga. In the Chattanooga office of the *Methodist Advocate*, Professor Caulkins was introduced by the editor to a black minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Reverend B. H. Johnson. Caulkins verbally acknowledged the introduction with "Good evening" but did not shake the black minister's extended hand. The Reverend Johnson felt insulted and did not hesitate to make known his feelings. *The Chattanooga Times* published several articles about the incident which had "attracted wide attention and excited much interest."<sup>15</sup>

The Freeman's Aid Society investigated the matter and reported that a majority of its executive committee felt that Professor Caulkins's action showed him to "entertain sentiments that unfit him for a position in a school with which our Freedmen's Aid Society is officially connected." The society called on the board of trustees to dismiss Caulkins.<sup>16</sup>

The trustees were faced with a real dilemma. They knew the power of the society but also were convinced that any suggestion that the university might be open to racial integration would cause the loss of white students. They initially refused to dismiss Caulkins, but after mounting pressure from the society and from northern ministers, they reluctantly consented to request Caulkins's resignation.

The racial question had damaged Chattanooga University seriously. Whites feared that the segregation policy would soon end. Two trustees resigned from the board, and six students from the fifteen-member senior class left Chattanooga to enroll at Grant Memorial in Athens. According to one student, they were advised to do so by President Spence.<sup>17</sup>

In the fall of 1887, Chattanooga University opened with an enrollment of 104, a considerable loss from the 175 of the previous year. Another faculty member, Professor Mary Presnell, was asked to resign, presumably for expressing strong opposition to biracial education. Richard Rust had sympathized with the trustees and lost his position as chief officer of the society which had been renamed the Freedmen's Aid and Southern Educational Society. Rust was named "honorary secretary" of the society, a position of no real power. John J. Manker was demoted from his position as dean of theology to that of assistant to President Edward Lewis.

*The Chattanooga Times* reported, in 1887, that the university was "not flourishing as it should." The newspaper placed much of the blame on the officials of Grant University, President Spence in particular, accusing Spence of instigating a number of letters written to Chattanooga students indicating that Chattanooga might well admit black students while the Athens school definitely would not.<sup>18</sup>

The new secretary of the Freedmen's Aid and Southern Educational Society, Doctor Joseph C. Hartzell, began a strong campaign for the merger of Chattanooga University and Grant Memorial. The situation at Chattanooga had become an embarrassment to the Methodist Episcopal Church. Moreover, the church's financial support of two institutions in such close proximity was difficult.

At its annual meeting in the fall of 1888, the Holston Conference heard a recommendation from a committee, composed of representatives from the two institutions and from the Freedmen's Aid Society, that the universities be consolidated. After considerable debate, the conference approved the merger. Under this arrangement, the university would maintain two campuses but would be governed by one president and a single board of trustees.<sup>19</sup>

Governor Robert L. Taylor, alumnus of East Tennessee Wesleyan, expressed approval of the merger. Even the *Chattanooga Times*, a staunch supporter of Chattanooga University, was optimistic, predicting that Grant Memorial University would now become "the grandest university in the South and one of the grandest in the Methodist Episcopal Church."<sup>20</sup>

A new charter for Grant Memorial University was issued in April 1889, and the board of trustees met in May to elect an administrative head. Dr. John F. Spence received ten of the thirteen votes cast, an outcome not favored by many Chattanoogaans. A headline in the *Chattanooga Times* read "Spence Gobbled It," and the story under the headline made clear the paper's opinion: "Athens and President Spence now have possession of Chattanooga and the Chattanooga University property. The game has been remarkably well played. The men who built the university have been shoved aside."<sup>21</sup>

Shortly after Spence's election, the trustees changed the title of the university's head from president to chancellor. Since some Chattanoogaans felt that continuation of Grant Memorial as the university's name suggested that Chattanooga University had been completely swallowed by the Athens school, the charter was amended to give the consolidated school the name U. S. Grant University.

The 1889 charter of consolidation called for the schools of medicine, law, and liberal arts to be located in Chattanooga with colleges of theology and technology in Athens. However, since liberal arts students were currently enrolled at Athens, these students would be allowed to continue their studies until graduation. The plan was to accept no new liberal arts students in Athens, but this plan was ignored. In the 1890 fall term, twenty-two freshmen enrolled in the liberal arts program, and in the following year, twenty-one. As a result, enrollment in liberal arts decreased in Chattanooga, a condition justifiably resented in Chattanooga. The location of all administrative offices in Athens was another source of dissatisfaction to Chattanoogaans.

So unsuccessful was the liberal arts program in Chattanooga that it was transferred to Athens in 1892, as was the preparatory school. At the same time, the theology school was moved to Chattanooga. The Athens campus now consisted of the



college of liberal arts, departments of music and fine arts, and the preparatory school. Chattanooga had the professional schools of theology, law, and medicine.

It would seem that as soon as any hope for harmony appeared, that hope was squelched by another occasion for rivalry. The Freedman's Aid and Southern Educational Society, represented by Dr. Hartzell, proposed the sale of an unused portion of the Chattanooga campus consisting of two city blocks bordered by Douglas, Oak, Baldwin, and Vine Streets. The motivation for the sale remains uncertain, one report being that the resulting funds would be used for additional building on the remaining campus, while another indicated the need for funds to liquidate some of the society's debt. Hearing of the proposed sale, John Spence assembled an investment group which offered \$90,000 for the land. Outraged by the attempted purchase of a portion of the campus, a group of Chattanoogaans brought legal action. The pending litigation resulted in the property's withdrawal from the market, but Spence's involvement in the attempted purchase increased antipathy toward him. At the annual meeting of the trustees, in 1891, Spence was replaced as chancellor by Bishop Isaac Joyce. Although he was given the title of president, Edward Lewis having resigned, Spence was relieved of all administrative duties and was to act as financial and field agent for the university.

The trustees had hoped Spence's demotion would result in his voluntary resignation, but he held on for two years, presiding periodically over faculty meetings in Athens. Feeling the need for bolder action, the trustees, in 1893, abolished the office of president and refused to reelect Spence to the board of trustees. In his response to the assembled board, Spence reminded trustees that during his service as chancellor, the school had increased in enrollment both in Athens and in Chattanooga but that his "obligations to the U. S. Grant University" were now "at an end." After his departure from the university, Spence used his considerable abilities to establish the American Temperance University in Harriman, Tennessee.<sup>22</sup>

The trustees attempted to placate Athenians by naming R. J. Cooke to the position of vice-chancellor. Dr. Cooke, later to become Bishop Cooke, was a graduate of East Tennessee Wesleyan and a resident of Athens. The people of Athens, however, were not reconciled to Spence's removal as indicated by a statement in the *Athens Post* declaring that Spence had been "roasted by the trustees without mercy." A protest meeting in Athens, attended by students, faculty, and townspeople, called for Spence's reinstatement but to no avail.<sup>23</sup>

Chattanoogaans, on the other hand, were jubilant. *The Chattanooga Times* reported that the rivalry between the two campuses could now be "a thing of the past." *The Times* writer went on to hope that the university's chief location would now be in Chattanooga "where every man of common sense knows it ought to be."<sup>24</sup>

During his tenure President Spence had worked diligently toward improving the Athens campus and strengthening its academic program. Paradoxically, his devotion was the root of both his success and his failure. Concerning himself with showing that Athens should be the site of the central university, he gave little attention to the

development of the Chattanooga campus after he became chancellor of the combined institutions. His strong local interest aroused so much controversy that his ouster became inevitable. Unquestionably, Spence's deep loyalty, combined with his administrative and fundraising abilities, had saved the Athens school when it was in danger of financial downfall.

A part of Spence's expansion of the Athens campus was the addition of important buildings. As has been noted, the college chapel was erected in 1882. Two boarding facilities for women, Bennett Hall and the Elizabeth Ritter Industrial Home, were constructed in 1890-91. Also acquired for college use, in 1889, was the Grandview Hotel on Woodward Avenue.

Bennett Hall, a 33-room dormitory, provided housing for young women at an individual cost of \$2.50 per week for room and board. Made possible by a donation from Mrs. P. L. Bennett of Pennsylvania, Bennett Hall occupied a site slightly east of the main college building, the present location of Lawrence Hall.

A significant achievement of President Spence's leadership was the establishment of Elizabeth Ritter Industrial Home which was supported by the Women's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The home missionary society was enthusiastic about establishing a school to serve young women of the southern highlands. Encouraged by President Spence, the society chose Athens as the location for the project for two principal reasons. An institution sponsored by the Methodist Episcopal Church already existed in Athens; moreover, the site was ideally located near the mountain areas of Tennessee, North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. Mrs. Elizabeth Ritter of Napoleon, Ohio, gave \$1,000 to the project, the largest single initial donation. University trustees deeded a part of the campus, behind the main college building, to the Women's Home Missionary Society, and Elizabeth Ritter Industrial Home opened in September 1891.

The stated object of Ritter Home was to train young women in "domestic economy" which included cooking, sewing, marketing, and keeping household accounts. Members of the missionary society vowed to "spare neither labor nor money" in the training of young ladies "to perform most skillfully all the duties that pertain to a woman as the head of a house or home." Each pupil was to perform chores involved in operating the hall and would attend regular university classes while also being instructed in the "applied sciences" of homemaking. The building accommodated about fifty young women. The fee for room and board was two dollars per week but could be reduced by the performance of extra duties. The missionary society would provide further assistance in needy cases.<sup>25</sup>

Lack of harmonious progress seems to have been the keynote of the 1890s at the university, and the opening of Ritter Hall was no exception. The first matron was a Mrs. F. V. Chapman from Ohio. After spending one year in Athens, Mrs. Chapman went home to Ohio for a summer vacation and gave a number of lectures describing her efforts to bring light to the darkness of the backward South. Although the girls she supervised were ignorant and uncouth, she said, some improvement was already

noticeable. Her remarks, published in northern newspapers and somehow finding their way southward, were quoted in the Athens newspaper. Citizens of Athens did not take kindly to her description of their home territory, and Mrs. Chapman received a letter advising her not to return to her post for she was in danger of being “egged.” Mrs. Chapman chose not to heed the warning, declaring that she would return to Athens wearing a washable dress. Upon her return for the fall session, no eggs were thrown, but she found not a single young woman from Athens or the surrounding area living in Ritter. Fearful that local hostility might be directed not only toward her but toward her pupils, Mrs. Chapman decreed that she and her charges would march together in group formation whenever it was necessary to leave the campus.<sup>26</sup>

Another building was added to the university’s facilities when, in 1889, the Grandview Hotel was purchased from the Athens Manufacturing and Mining Company. This company, in spite of grandiose plans, soon became defunct and offered to sell the partially completed hotel for \$15,000. Located in North Athens on Woodward Avenue, the building, on which the company had already spent \$40,000, had five stories and occupied some 80,000 square feet. Because of the enormity of the red-brick structure, Athenians quickly dubbed it the “Red Elephant.” Fundraising for the building’s completion was given a significant boost by James Parker of Chicago who contributed \$10,000.

The original plan was to use the building for a new school of technology, but this plan did not materialize. With the official return of the liberal arts program to Athens, Parker College opened in September 1897 as the site of the College of Liberal Arts of U. S. Grant University. In addition to classrooms, laboratories, and dormitory rooms, the “Red Elephant” contained an auditorium with a seating capacity of six hundred, a parlor, and meeting rooms for literary societies. A kitchen and dining hall were located in the basement.<sup>27</sup>

Records for Parker College are sparse, but it probably was used as the liberal arts building until 1906. It may never have been completely finished or furnished. Its history came to an end in July 1907 when it was struck by lightning and burned.

The 1897-98 catalog which announced the opening of Parker College also mentioned departments of music, art, elocution, and oratory and a commercial department offering instruction in shorthand and typewriting. The preparatory school, serving the largest number of students, continued, and a “normal” department trained prospective teachers.

While administrators and faculty members were concerned with the relationship of two campuses, Athens students continued to occupy their time with class attendance and study, with a slightly enhanced program of extracurricular activities, and with attempts, authorized and unauthorized, to add a bit of fun and excitement to a restricted environment.

Literary societies, which were now four in number, remained the dominant form of extracurricular involvement. In addition to the Athenian, Philomathean, and Saphonian societies, the Knightonian, for women, had been added, named for a re-

spected professor, Mrs. A. C. Knight. Ministerial students had their own society, the Simpsonian. Almost all students belonged to a literary society, and their involvement in composition, debating, and oratory was a valuable experience for future teachers, lawyers, and ministers. James A. Fowler, a prominent attorney, wrote that many of the students derived as much benefit from the literary societies as from the classroom.<sup>28</sup>

The literary societies initiated the annual observance of Arbor Day. Following the first Arbor Day celebration, in 1887, the Sapphonian society successfully petitioned the faculty to approve the continuation of the observance. On Arbor Day in 1896 and in 1897, the societies planted a number of maple trees which are still being appreciated, especially in their autumnal beauty.<sup>29</sup>

A student newspaper, the *University Exponent*, made its first appearance during the fall term of 1895. Under close faculty supervision, the paper was designed to be published monthly with eight issues during an academic year. Cost of publication was met by the sale of advertising space to local merchants.<sup>30</sup>

Another welcome addition to the college scene came with the addition to the faculty of Professor Joel S. Barlow who organized a university band. From its beginning, the school had placed emphasis on music with strong enrollment in vocal and instrumental instruction, but Professor Barlow's fourteen-member band certainly enlivened the program. The report of the *University Exponent* that "the band is progressing nicely and in short time we expect to hear some good music from it" seems an instance of damning with faint praise; the band evidently made sufficient progress since it performed for visiting dignitaries arriving at the Southern Railway station and for commencement and class day.<sup>31</sup>

Professor Barlow was well-qualified to lead the fledgling band since he had been a member of the Great Band of England (Queen Victoria's Band) and had later given music lessons in New York and in Chicago. His daughter Grace became an instructor in voice and piano at the university. Professor Barlow also organized a ladies orchestra and a musical society, the Beethoven Music Club.<sup>32</sup>

Other campus organizations were religious groups, the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., and the Epworth League. In addition to their religious programs and projects, these organizations at times sponsored social events such as ice cream suppers.

A growing interest in athletics resulted, in 1897, in the organization of a baseball team and in the formation of the Grant University Athletic Association. The fifty-member association assumed as its first project the preparation of baseball and track fields. North of the main college building was a tennis court; both tennis and croquet were popular games, especially with female students. The faculty ruled on permissible playing times, firmly excluding Sundays.

The faculty tried to keep strict control of all student activities, but this, of course, was impossible. Most student pranks were harmless attempts at amusement. In 1897, student Horton received twenty demerits for throwing a dead bird through a window



into a classroom. Student Oakes imitated this method of classroom disruption but threw gravel instead; his penalty was a mere ten demerits.<sup>33</sup>

A particularly ingenious prank is described in the memoirs of Harry Caldwell. A member of the class of 1898, Caldwell was the son of a prominent Methodist minister and university trustee. After his graduation, Caldwell gained considerable renown as a missionary to China, where he served for more than forty years, and as a naturalist, big game hunter, and author. The prank that was the triumph of his student days involved the Ritter Home, the college chapel, a gate, and a "Mrs. C," undoubtedly the same Ritter matron, Mrs. Chapman, who was earlier threatened with "egging." Caldwell and five friends had been accused by Mrs. C. of hanging around the windows of Ritter at night, a false accusation, or so they maintained. Ritter was then enclosed by a picket fence with an entrance gate. Mrs. C. told the young men that if they were ever found inside Ritter's gate, she would see that they were arrested for trespassing. The boys held a conference at which they decided to remove the gate; if there were no gate, they reasoned, they could not possibly be found inside it. In the darkness of night, they took the gate and threw it into a gravel pit. A reward was offered for recovery of the gate or for evidence revealing the guilty party or parties. The gate-stealers decided to return the gate to campus, but instead of placing it in its original position, they hung it from the ceiling of the chapel. This was a stealthy, nocturnal operation involving the use of a ladder and a long chain. The rest of the story is best told in the words of Dr. Caldwell:

The following morning we were in our usual places for the morning chapel services. Not one of us so much as glanced upward as we sat in our junior and senior class seats, well forward. Everything seemed abnormally quiet as we waited for the faculty and staff to take their accustomed places on the rostrum. Finally one of the venerable teachers scurried up the aisle and onto the platform, hurrying to the speaker's desk where she placed her Bible and hymnbook. Mrs. Knight, sister of Bishop Warren of the Methodist church, was revered by all the students; it seemed unfortunate that it had to be she who was to lead chapel service that particular morning. She thumbed her Bible and then began to read the lesson of the morning. It happened to be the twenty-fourth Psalm. There seemed to be the usual devotional spirit brooding over the place until the leader read the seventeenth verse. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors!" There was a disturbing giggle. The dear old lady characteristically looked over her glasses, and with hand to her mouth said, "Well!" She looked a while at the assembly, and proceeded to continue reading. When again there was, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up. . ." the hundreds of pious students could contain themselves no longer. There was first a suppressed, and then an uproarious burst of laughter. The old saint paused, put her hand to her mouth, hacked three coughs, and then exploded with, "Well,

something seems to amuse you much!" By this time every eye was looking upward. Faculty members who had not noticed what was hanging heavily over their heads, looked up and broke into broad grins. The leader of the devotions sidled off a distance and looked above her. There was the lost gate hanging exactly over the pulpit! Chapel service was abruptly terminated for that day. It did appear to six students that it was more than mere accident that of the whole book of Psalms that particular Psalm should have been selected for that particular morning. Those devout sons of parsonage homes could but wonder whether God was not on their side, even in a college prank.<sup>34</sup>

Whether or not the identity of the gate-stealers was discovered is not recorded nor is there any record of punishment. The incident makes clear that faculty members were not without a sense of humor, and by the 1890s, they appear to be more tolerant and to allow greater student freedom. By 1892, gentlemen were allowed to call on young ladies in the dormitory parlors between the hours of 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays. By 1899, visiting hours had been extended to "out of study hours on any school day," but the gentleman caller must have obtained permission from the dean.<sup>35</sup>

Students of the 1890s were more apt to question faculty decisions than were their predecessors. Reflecting a somewhat more lenient attitude, the faculty responded more favorably to student requests and were less likely to summarily expel trespassers against college rules. A case in point is the lengthening of the Christmas holidays, by student request, in 1892. Previously the Christmas break was limited to two days before the holiday and two or three days afterward. This schedule was adequate for students living near the campus, but the increasing enrollment of students from other areas presented a problem. When 120 students petitioned the faculty for a longer recess, the holidays were extended to a period from December 22 to January 3.<sup>36</sup>

Students also made their opinions heard, in 1894, when two brothers were expelled for participation in a disturbance "very unbecoming the occasion and the church" and for "showing great disrespect to a chief officer of the University." Given a chance of avoiding expulsions by signing a confession of guilt and apologizing for their behavior, the students refused. Evidently the two culprits were popular with their peers, for several students protested the expulsion and requested an explanation. A faculty committee met with the protestors to explain faculty action. The incident had a satisfactory conclusion, for the expulsion was revoked when the brothers agreed to accept responsibility for their behavior and to obey university rules in the future.<sup>37</sup>

The faculty also became a bit less rigid in demands concerning class attendance, especially for seniors preparing commencement speeches. A requirement for graduation was the composition and delivery of an oration, eight to ten minutes in length. Near the beginning of the final term, each prospective graduate chose a topic and submitted it to the faculty for approval. As commencement approached, the student

was assigned a faculty advisor who would determine whether the oration was sufficiently refined in language and appropriate in content for public delivery. Students of the nineteenth century had the same tendency toward procrastination found among their successors in later centuries, and as the deadline approached, frequently asked to be excused from classes in order to work on their orations. The faculty usually agreed to allow absence from classes, for a few days and often for a full week, with the stipulation that all class assignments be completed before graduation.

Some oration topics from the 1888 commencement included: "Political Party Power" by A. D. Collier; "The New South" by W. M. Thomas; "Was Gray Mistaken?" by M. G. Rambow; and "Character and Tendency of American Thought" by Mary Hager Matney.<sup>38</sup>

An alumni association had been formed by the first graduating class of East Tennessee Wesleyan in 1871 and planned to meet annually during commencement week. During its early years, the association selected an alumnus as speaker at its annual meeting which was open to the public. Since graduating classes were small, alumni membership grew slowly, and attendance at meetings was low. In 1874, when ten members were present, David Bolton was elected president and served in that capacity at various times over a span of several years. In an effort to stimulate interest and increase attendance, the association planned to hold a banquet in 1885 but had to abandon the plan for lack of financial support. Another attempt in 1888 had the same result. The first alumni banquet did not occur until 1901.

No records of the alumni association's business meetings exist for the years 1888-1892. In 1893, the association had received a gift of twenty-five dollars from S. M. Broyles and approved the donation of this amount to the university to be used toward the furnishing of a room in the "new university building," presumably Parker College. Also in 1893, faculty members were admitted as associate members which increased both attendance and interest in giving assistance to the school. In 1894, President Bolton urged the association to "do something" toward establishing a fund for needy students, but no record exists as to what, if anything, was done.<sup>39</sup>

Twenty members appeared for the 1895 meeting where Colonel H. B. Case spoke in favor of an annual alumni fund. A five-member committee was appointed to devise "a method of raising funds among the alumni and to provide for the application of the money raised." The following year's report announced donations amounting to sixty-five dollars.<sup>40</sup>

An important accomplishment of the association was the publication of an alumni directory which gave a short biographical sketch of each alumnus and alumna who graduated between 1871 and 1896. The association approved the publication at its 1895 meeting and appointed a committee to compile information and prepare the directory. David Bolton, editor, was assisted by committee members J. W. Bayless, H. B. Case, W. F. McCarron, and W. A. Wright. When the project was completed, in



August 1896, one thousand copies were printed and sold for twenty-five cents each. A few of the distinguished names appearing are:

- Harry S. Caldwell, 1898, minister, missionary to China, author, scientist.
- Richard J. Cooke, 1880, minister, bishop, author, educator, editor of the *Methodist Advocate Journal*.
- Samuel Silas Curry, 1872, minister, author, professor at Harvard, Yale, and Boston Universities, founder of School of Expression in Boston.
- James A. Fowler, 1884, prominent attorney, Assistant Attorney General of the U.S.
- Xenophon Zenas Hicks, 1891, lawyer, judge of U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.
- John J. Manker, 1871, minister, editor of the *Methodist Advocate Journal*.
- Robert L. ("Bob") Taylor, Congressman, U.S. Senator, Governor.

Bishop Isaac Joyce resigned as chancellor of U. S. Grant University in 1896. The office of vice-chancellor was abolished although Dr. R. J. Cooke continued to teach in the theology department. During the 1896-97 term, the university, left without a real administrative head, was directed by Dean W. A. Wright in Athens and the deans of the professional schools in Chattanooga.

Inadequate finances continued to present a serious problem. Better building maintenance was needed, and faculty salaries not only were woefully low, but in 1897 were again in arrears. Professor Bolton, who began to teach in 1873 for an annual salary of \$600, was earning \$1,100 in 1897. Other faculty salaries included: Dean Wright, \$1,300; Professor Hooper, \$1,100; Professor Ferguson, \$900; Professor Burke (preparatory school principal), \$700; and Professor Knight, \$700 plus lodging. For such wages, faculty members were expected not only to teach classes but to enforce college rules, check dorms and cottages to ensure observance of study and curfew hours, aid in student recruitment and fundraising, and attend daily chapel services and Sunday worship. In spite of the faculty's heavy duties coupled with meager wages, the school continued to attract teachers of high quality who were both academically and morally strong.<sup>42</sup>

Not only were faculty salaries low, but teachers had little assurance of receiving their pittances on time. In 1893, Chancellor Joyce informed the Athens faculty that the university's deficit of about \$1,600 represented an eleven percent deficit in each teacher's salary. The faculty was given the option of either closing the academic year at the end of the second term, March 3, when teachers would be paid in full, or of continuing classes until the end of the year with an eleven percent salary reduction.

The faculty chose the second alternative and continued to teach at reduced salaries for the full year.<sup>43</sup>

In 1897, the faculty seems more aggressive. They were aware that the Freedmen's Aid and Southern Educational Society had failed to pay \$600 of the amount designated for the Athens campus, and they complained that local income had suffered because of improvements made on the society's property, an obvious reference to the Chattanooga campus. Stating that they were "in need of money for living expenses and for the purpose of traveling in the interest of the school," faculty members urged Dean Wright to apply to teacher's salaries funds "accrued from the sale of the machinery in the college building in North Athens."<sup>44</sup>

A challenging situation faced the next leader of U. S. Grant University. John H. Race assumed his role as president in 1898, and a new era began.

## CHAPTER 4

### A BITTER CONFLICT: 1898-1906



**“The day of battle is at hand -  
go forth to glorious war.”**

*- Charles Wesley*

In the fall of 1897, John H. Race, a young minister in Binghamton, New York, was surprised by a telegram from John W. Hamilton, the new secretary of the Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society. The telegram asked Race to consider the chancellorship of Grant University, a school which he had “scarcely heard of.” He replied that he needed time to investigate such an unexpected offer.<sup>1</sup>

Encouraged by Hamilton to make an expense-paid visit to the university, Race and his wife arrived in November 1897 to inspect the two campuses and met with a discouraging sight. Buildings were in need of repair, teachers were poorly paid and dispirited, enrollment was dwindling, and trustees and other supporters were torn by the rivalry between Athens and Chattanooga. The university's financial plight made it difficult to meet minimal operating costs. Race reported to a friend that it would be easier to build a completely new school than to rescue Grant University from its desperate condition. Apparently feeling intrigued and inspired by the enormity of the challenge, Race accepted the leadership of Grant at a salary amounting to one-third of what he was earning as a minister in New York. He chose to assume the title of president rather than that of chancellor.<sup>2</sup>

John H. Race, a native of Pennsylvania, held both a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts from Princeton University. Originally interested in a career in business, he turned to the ministry after the loss of his left hand in a sawmill accident, an event which he described as a “turning point” in his life. Race was ordained to the ministry at the age of 28, and Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church in Binghamton, New York, was his first pastorate.<sup>3</sup>

Although Race visited the campuses in the fall of 1897, he continued his ministerial duties in New York until August 1898. He and his wife then moved to Athens and lived in Bennett Hall for three months before deciding to make Chattanooga their

place of residence. This decision effectively moved the university's headquarters to Chattanooga, where Race believed it belonged, and was viewed by Athenians as an act of hostility toward the Athens campus.

Race saw himself as an objective outsider who could form an unprejudiced opinion of the university's problems. One unfortunate mistake, he believed, was the school's name. An institution founded by the Northern Methodist Church was located in the South and given the name of a Northern general. The situation, he felt, was comparable to that of a school being established in New England by the Southern Methodist Church and named for Robert E. Lee. The name, he determined, must be changed.

There were, however, more pressing problems than a name change to be addressed. The collegiate liberal arts department at Athens was in a state of decline both from the standpoint of enrollment and of academics. Enrollment had fallen from 114 in 1880 to 39 in 1898. The university's total enrollment included 227 students in professional or postgraduate courses and 542 in the preparatory school. Meeting with university trustees, Race pointed out that the liberal arts college which should be the strongest component was, in fact, the weakest. Moreover, the University Senate, accrediting agency of the Methodist Episcopal Church, had put the institution on notice that work in English must be strengthened if its status as a university was to be maintained. Instruction in the modern languages and in the sciences also caused concern. Professional departments, Race stated, were stronger than the liberal arts, resulting in a "top heavy" situation. Race also believed that Athens professors devoted too much time to the collegiate curriculum to the detriment of preparatory students, a much larger group. His proposed remedy for this undesirable situation was the transfer of the liberal arts college to Chattanooga with the preparatory school to remain in Athens where it could be strengthened and developed into a "first class" secondary school. This alteration, Race insisted, would result in improved facilities and resources in Athens where "attention would be directed to the fundamentals in a liberal education."<sup>4</sup>

Race estimated that the relocation of the liberal arts college and the upgrading of its program would cost \$10,000 annually for five years. Chattanooga trustees were unreceptive to another fundraising campaign, and the Freedmen's Aid Society was so heavily in debt that it could not make this financial commitment. Realizing that his plan was not immediately feasible, Race focused on strengthening academic standards in the university's present structure. New students arriving in 1899 were examined in English, reading, and spelling, and those found deficient were required to enroll in remedial classes. Students having difficulty with any subject were assigned to a required study hall.<sup>5</sup>

A further enhancement of instruction came by the addition of several new faculty members with strong academic credentials. Added to the English department was Mary D. Karr, M.A., Wellesley, and to the science faculty, W. Newton Holmes who held an M.A. from Syracuse. W. W. Phelon, with a Ph.D. from Columbia, was to

teach political and social science, and Jennie M. Roberts, an M.A. graduate of Illinois Wesleyan, joined the Latin department. A new music teacher, Edna Ames Arnold, had studied at the renowned Leschetizky School in Vienna.

President Race also recognized the need to improve library and science facilities. The limited library collection was still confined to a single room in Old College, and laboratories lacked the latest scientific equipment. Financial problems had prevented needed improvements in these areas. J. W. Fisher, a trustee who enrolled two of his children in 1898, reported to his fellow trustees on deficiencies which he had observed. Not only was the inadequacy of library and laboratory facilities evident, he said, but he was particularly unhappy with the condition of the men's dormitory, Hatfield Hall, which he felt was "not a credit to our Methodists." Speaking to the trustees in June 1900, President Race stressed the need for improved laboratories and an adequate dormitory for men.<sup>6</sup>

While Race undertook a campaign to raise funds in the North, Dean W. A. Wright was assigned the task of soliciting funds for a science building. A contract was negotiated to make 400,000 bricks for the new structure. Wright secured the support of William Banfield, an industrialist of Beaver, Pennsylvania, who agreed to donate \$16,400 for the building's construction as a memorial to his deceased son. Trustee James W. Fisher, of Newport, Tennessee, gave \$6,000 for laboratories, and Mrs. A. C. Knight, a longtime faculty member, provided \$1,000.<sup>7</sup>

Banfield Hall, a four-story brick building in the Victorian Gothic style, was formally opened in October 1902, with speeches by Bishop John M. Walden and Dr. W. P. Thirkield, secretary of, the Freedmen's Aid Society. Since the principal donor, William Banfield, could not attend the opening ceremony, the formal dedication was postponed until May 1903. At this time, Banfield, still unable to attend, sent a family representative.

Intended to serve primarily as a science building, Banfield Hall also answered the pressing need for additional library space. Funding for the library was provided by John W. Foster of Athens. Two rooms on the second floor housed the book collection and a reading room and were named the Foster Library. E. C. Ferguson added the duties of a librarian to his teaching responsibilities.

Banfield Hall also became the meeting place for the female literary societies, the Sapphonians and the Knightonians. Each group was assigned a room on the second floor for weekly meetings. Although literary societies had begun to vanish from many colleges by the beginning of the twentieth century, giving way to fraternities and sororities, those on the Athens campus continued to exert a powerful influence on the lives of students.

The year 1902 saw not only the opening of Banfield Hall but the addition of Blakeslee Hall as a dormitory for men. A gift from Mr. and Mrs. C. S. Blakeslee of Macksburg, Ohio, made possible the purchase of a two-story brick building on the corner of North Jackson and Robeson Streets, the former residence of W. M. Nixon, a prominent businessman. The donors were particularly anxious that the building not



only furnish living quarters for young men but that the occupants be given training in courtesy. The college administration agreed that students should receive “the refining influences, such as prevail in a well-regulated home.” Cost for room and board, including lights and fuel, was three dollars per week with two occupants per room. Blakeslee Hall functioned as a dormitory until 1909 when it became the dean’s residence and later, since 1925, the home of the college president.<sup>8</sup>

After the acquisition of Blakeslee Hall, a male student could choose between two dormitories, could occupy one of the several campus cottages, or could live off-campus in a private home. The latter two options were not available to female students who were required to live in either Bennett Hall or Ritter Home.

President Race remained determined to change the location of the liberal arts college from Athens to Chattanooga. Speaking to trustees in March 1902, he noted progress on the Athens campus and anticipated that Athens would be the site of a strong secondary school, announcing that the collegiate department was to be established in Chattanooga. Friction again arose, but trustees loyal to Athens apparently succeeded, at least temporarily, in effecting an agreement that would allow a liberal arts department in each of the two places. School records state: “Not finding it easy to remove the College of Liberal Arts from Athens to Chattanooga, a so-called compromise was made . . . by which a college of liberal arts was to be opened in the autumn of 1904 and the one in Athens left undisturbed.”<sup>9</sup>

Plans for the opening of a liberal arts college in Chattanooga, in the fall of 1904, was a victory for President Race, but not an uncontested one, for old suspicions and rivalries were revived. When two vacancies in faculty positions at Athens were not filled, ostensibly in order to balance the budget, Athens officials viewed this decision as an effort to weaken their program in order to promote the one in Chattanooga. President Race was accused of advertising the college of liberal arts in Chattanooga without mentioning the school in Athens. Critics argued that such an omission violated an 1889 agreement that all advertising be joint and each branch given equal emphasis. Athenians felt that their counterparts in Chattanooga sought to create the impression that the collegiate liberal arts program in Athens had been discontinued and transferred to Chattanooga when no such official decision had been made by the trustees. They were alarmed by the thought that the older school might be abolished and all university programs be located in Chattanooga, a prospect they deemed a “colossal folly.” Since Athens loyalists were in the minority on the board of trustees, the Athens group resorted to the courts in an attempt to strengthen their position.<sup>10</sup>

A suit was filed in the Chancery Court of McMinn County on August 4, 1904, by John W. Bayless, Athens businessman and trustee, and Robert J. Fisher, industrialist and former trustee. Defendants in the case were trustees of U. S. Grant University, President John H. Race, and seventeen trustees of Grant Memorial University who had supported the merger with Chattanooga University in 1889. Fifteen years had brought no forgiveness!

The central argument of the suit was that the original plan of unification had been violated since that plan “provided that both schools be kept intact and that both should be equally developed.” The plaintiffs also alleged that President Race had directed his major efforts toward building the Chattanooga branch to the detriment of the Athens campus. The court was asked for a three-part ruling: a complete separation of the two schools; an injunction prohibiting President Race from any part in the management of the Athens school until final disposition of the case; and a ruling against the establishment of a liberal arts college in Chattanooga.<sup>11</sup>

The plaintiffs, at least initially, claimed to be acting without hostility but from a sincere desire to settle a troublesome issue. After filing the suit, John W. Bayless wrote to President Race, addressing him as “Dear Friend,” and explained the motive for the litigation. The location of the liberal arts school, Bayless wrote, had been a “bone of contention” for years, and it was now time for the issue to be settled “once and for all time.” His view was that the matter could be settled only by one of two methods. The liberal arts department could be totally absorbed by Chattanooga which would mean, he wrote, “a complete surrender of all that is best and dearest to us.” The second option would be “a last ditch fight for our rights and the complete divorcement of the two schools.” His choice of the latter option, said Bayless, was done without ill will as a friendly but determined effort to defend the rights of the Athens institution.<sup>12</sup>

Writing in response to Bayless, Race stated, “There is not now, and there never has been, as far as I am able to judge, any disposition on the part of the Board of Trustees to plan for anything else than what seems to be the highest and best good of the entire institution.” Aware that he had been accused of prejudice toward Chattanooga, Race declared, “I know no difference in my loyalty and love between the department at Athens and the department at Chattanooga. Personally, I have not had any other motive than to devote my energy toward the development of a bigger and better institution at Athens than we have ever known.”<sup>13</sup>

In late August, Chancellor T. M. McConnell ruled in favor of the plaintiffs on two of their three requests. The court’s decision allowed for the separation of the two schools and for the absence of any participation by Race in the management of the Athens institution. However, the third request, prohibiting the establishment of a liberal arts college in Chattanooga, was denied. The court reasoned, quite logically, that by their insistence upon complete separation of the two schools, Athens officials gave up any right to control what happened in Chattanooga.

While plans went forward in Chattanooga for the opening of a liberal arts college, the Athens complainants appealed the Chancery Court decision to the Tennessee Appellate Court. When that court overruled the previous decision, the case was brought to the Tennessee Supreme Court where it remained for more than a year before a final ruling.

In the meantime, President Race had persuaded the Freedmen’s Aid Society to discontinue any financial support of the Athens campus. He also refused to sign the

diplomas of the 1905 graduates or to participate in commencement exercises.

During the 1904-1905 litigation period, the administration of the Athens school rested with a local executive committee consisting of Dean W. A. Wright, Professor David Bolton, and trustees John Foster, John Bayless, and William Banfield. The latter was unable to attend meetings regularly since he lived in Pennsylvania. In May 1905, John F. Spence, former president, joined the committee. His loyalty to the Athens school had led to his departure in 1893; now he was home again and ready to work on behalf of the school he loved.

The executive committee met in May 1905 to approve the granting of degrees to five candidates for Bachelor of Arts and three for Master of Arts. Dean Wright informed the group of President Race's refusal to sign diplomas and updated them on the state of the appeal still before the Tennessee Supreme Court. He also brought the unwelcome news that the liberal arts college showed a \$2,400 deficit for the past year, partly due to the loss of expected funds from the Freedmen's Aid Society. After William Banfield offered to donate \$1,000, Spence agreed to sign a note for \$1,000 if Chairman John Foster would provide the additional \$200.<sup>14</sup>

The committee also adopted a resolution in appreciation of Mrs. A. C. Knight who had resigned in May due to ill health. Mrs. Knight had served the university for twenty-five years and had won the affection and esteem of trustees, faculty, students, and the entire Athens community. In appreciation of her devotion and service, the committee invited her to remain in her apartment in Bennett Hall, free of expense for rent and meals, for "so long as it may be her pleasure to remain with us."<sup>15</sup>

Mrs. Knight was unable to attend the commencement exercises at which the speaker was her brother, Dr. William F. Warren, Dean of the School of Theology of Boston University. During the summer she moved to her brother's home in Massachusetts where she died in September at the age of 79.

Enrollment for the school year 1904-05 was 283 with 3 graduate students, 36 liberal arts undergraduates, and the remainder in the preparatory department or enrolled as special students.

At a meeting during commencement week, the Alumni Association adopted a paper entitled "A Fair Statement of Facts" which deplored "the effort being made to destroy the college of liberal arts in Athens by securing its removal to Chattanooga, with the purpose of converting the school at Athens into an academy or preparatory department." The document stated that alumni were not opposed to "another school of liberal arts in Chattanooga or any other city of the South" but were protesting "the unfair treatment of the work of Athens both from a legal and Christian standpoint." The paper, along with a petition signed by sixteen leaders, including Dean Wright and Professor Bolton, was presented to the trustees as a protest against the plan to reduce the Athens branch to academy status.<sup>16</sup>

Controversy between the two campuses was a matter of public knowledge. Newspapers and church publications, not always unbiased, gave considerable attention to

viewpoints expressed by the opposing factions and probably affected adversely enrollment and financial contributions.

The long-awaited Supreme Court decision came in November 1905. The court ruled against the Athens plaintiffs, upholding the decision of the appellate court and restoring administrative power to President Race and the board of trustees. Following this decision, Race and the trustees' vice-president, J. E. Annis, came to Athens to meet in Banfield Hall with Wright, Bolton, Bayless, and Foster. Race assured the group that all financial obligations incurred by the Athens branch would be paid in full.<sup>17</sup>

Questions arose relative to the restoration of funds from the Freedmen's Aid Society. Annis gave his opinion that payment would be resumed if authorities at the Athens branch would agree to work in harmony with the society's policies. At this point, John Foster made his position abundantly clear. As long as he was a trustee, Foster said, he would not comply with any policy or condition that meant the removal of the liberal arts college from Athens. "If I am a member of the board," declared Foster, "and an organized effort is made to remove the College of Liberal Arts to Chattanooga, I will enjoin the action, and I'll spend money—I'll spend stacks of it—to defeat the action." John W. Bayless stated his concurrence with Foster's position. The group finally agreed that the question of removal was not the subject of this meeting and that work at Athens should proceed as usual for the remainder of the school year.<sup>18</sup>

At the meeting's conclusion, President Race announced that in view of his present commitment to acquiring \$200,000 toward university endowment, he was unable to serve in any other capacity until April 1906, the deadline for meeting the endowment challenge. The endowment campaign was successful and the goal reached in April, at which time the Athens faculty voted to extend "congratulations and rejoicings" to President Race for his accomplishment.<sup>19</sup>

During the financial campaign, President Race visited Athens infrequently but did agree to officiate at the 1906 commencement exercises and to be present during commencement week. During this time, he met with Dean Wright to discuss the budget and to approve faculty appointments. Friendly relations were maintained, at least on the surface, but the furor was not over. A month later, when trustees met in Chattanooga, fuel was added to the smoldering resentment felt by Athenians.

At the Chattanooga meeting, Bishop J. M. Walden reported on faculty staffing and declared vacancies in the position of academic dean and of chairman of the mathematics department, posts currently held by Dean Wright and Professor Bolton. The report was adopted with only John W. Bayless and James A. Fowler, Athens supporters, abstaining. Clearly the vote was in retaliation for the strong support given by Wright and Bolton to the litigation against university officials. Although ousted as dean, Wright was offered the position of Latin professor, at a reduced salary, which he refused to accept.<sup>20</sup>



The action against the two faculty members was met with strong opposition from trustees loyal to Athens and from the many friends of Wright and Bolton. Both were alumni, and both had devoted their most productive years to the Athens institution. Both were highly respected by students, alumni, townspeople, and members of the Holston Conference.

Two days after the Chattanooga meeting, James A. Fowler, alumnus, trustee, and prominent Knoxville attorney, wrote to President Race and the board's executive committee, protesting the punitive action taken against Wright and Bolton. He explained his failure to speak up at the meeting by stating that he was "fearful that something might be said that would mar the good feeling that appeared to prevail among the board members." Fowler conceded that the litigation may have been "ill-advised" but contended that support of the lawsuit by Wright and Bolton had been motivated only by their sincere belief in the rightness of the cause. Furthermore, wrote Fowler:

the character and the efficiency of the two men had never been questioned.

The Athens school was their alma mater. They had witnessed its early years of struggle, and had given the best years of their lives to uplifting it from obscurity to a position of respectability, and naturally they resented what they conceived to be an effort to cripple its influence. You who were opposed to their views . . . believed you had a broader view than they and had no such purpose as they supposed, but you ought to be kind enough to overlook the words and acts of us who adhere to Athens when they are the outgrowth, not only of our best judgment, but also of the memories that survive the love that binds us to that institution.<sup>21</sup>

Another trustee added a letter of vigorous protest. William Banfield, a personal friend of Wright and a major donor to the institution, had not been present at the board meeting. When he learned of the dismissal of Wright and Bolton, Banfield wrote to President Race:

I find that Dr. Bolton was dropped and that the deanship was taken from William Wright. I infer that this is a punishment for the part they took in the litigation. If this is so, I sincerely protest against the course taken by the trustees.

Banfield explained that he previously had tried not to take sides in the unpleasant controversy, feeling not sufficiently knowledgeable of the institution's history and of the original agreement between the two branches. Now, however, he felt compelled to drop his attitude of impartiality to defend Wright and Bolton in their right to insist on the original agreement. No one should question their loyalty to the institution. Both sides, Banfield contended, had made mistakes, and these two dedicated educators should not be penalized.<sup>22</sup>

Fowler and Banfield were influential voices which could not be ignored. In June, Race invited Wright to lunch with him in Chattanooga. They were joined by J. E. Annis and John A. Patten, and some smoothing of troubled waters occurred. The re-



instatement of Wright and Bolton, however, was contingent on their promise to work in harmony with the administrative authority of the university, and they were asked to write letters agreeing to this condition. Having the wisdom to know when they were beaten, the two men complied.<sup>23</sup>

At a July meeting in Athens, recommendations concerning the Athens departments were finalized in preparation for their presentation to the Freedmen's Aid Society. Coming from Chattanooga to meet with Dean Wright and Professor Bolton were Race, Annis, and Patten. Race presented his plan to move the liberal arts college to Chattanooga. Athens was to be the site of a four-year preparatory school but also of a two-year collegiate program with a diploma, not a degree, to be awarded at its completion. This design, along with the recommendation for the reinstatement of Wright and Bolton, was taken to Cincinnati by John A. Patten, and approval was given by the Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society.

Now it was time for President Race to return to his belief that a name change was in order. In 1907, U. S. Grant University became the University of Chattanooga with a branch in Athens known as the Athens School of the University of Chattanooga. At the last commencement exercises of U. S. Grant University in Athens, degrees were awarded to: Ellis E. Crabtree, John Jennings, Walter F. Williams, Isabelle Gettys, and J. Howard Jarvis.

Tension existing among their elders must have been felt by students on the Athens campus, but school records have few indications of the effects of such tension on the student body. They continued their limited social contacts by holding ice cream parties, candy pulls, literary society entertainments, and various events sponsored by the Epworth League, Y.M.C.A., and Y.W.C.A. The Athenian Literary Society sponsored an annual chestnut hunt, this being before the chestnut blight hit the area. Regulations regarding the chestnut hunt, as well as similar activities, included: (1) no pairing off of boys with girls, (2) the presence of a chaperone, and (3) returning to the campus before dark. Ingenious students often found ways of avoiding at least the first regulation.<sup>24</sup>

The popularity of "tacky parties" may need some explanation for later generations. At a tacky party, each participant came dressed in outlandish garb, "tacky" meaning "lacking in style or shabby." A prize was awarded to the person judged to be "tackiest."

Rules governing student life were still strict, forbidding drinking of alcohol, dancing, playing cards, using profanity, visiting saloons, and leaving town without the permission of the dean. Since few, if any, rules go unbroken, a number of students were given demerits or denied social privileges for infractions.

Some students even transgressed by engaging in activities which the faculty had lacked the foresight to rule against. In February 1902, ten demerits were given to James F. Cooke and to R. Lim Henderson for making a nocturnal visit to Bennett Hall for the purpose of obtaining an organ and several benches. These objects were

placed as an obstruction outside the chapel door. Inside the chapel, Dr. C. M. Hall of Knoxville was lecturing on Abraham Lincoln!<sup>25</sup>

A student baseball team held afternoon practices on a field originally intended for croquet. In the spring of 1904, the team played against Jefferson City, Fountain City, Maryville, and Knoxville. Members of the 1904 team were James F. Cooke, Maynard Ellis, W. W. Durand, O. F. Whittle, J. L. Robb, Curtis George, Frank Shelton, W. R. Miller, and Charles F. Heastly. In 1906, restrictions placed on the baseball team required all games to be played on the home field. Even a trip to play nearby Sweetwater was denied, the faculty judging such an excursion "unwise."<sup>26</sup>

A comment in an issue of the 1898 student newspaper stated that the "brutal football game does not disturb our peace, nor check our intellectual and moral growth." Just five years later, football appeared, and "intellectual and moral growth" apparently succumbed to enthusiasm for the popular sport. In 1903, the football team played against Sweetwater, Lincoln Memorial Law School, and the team of Chattanooga's professional schools. Only against Sweetwater was the team victorious, by a score of 11-0.<sup>27</sup>

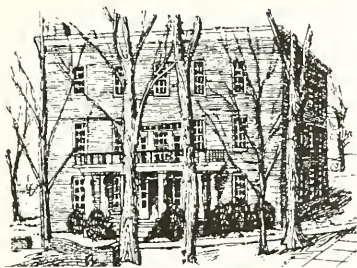
Development of skill in music and in elocution was strongly encouraged by the faculty. In the spring of the 1906-07 term a recital given by the Department of Music and Elocution featured among the performers: Catherine Keith, Lena Boggess, Joy Bayless, Margaret Farrell, Phoebe Horton, and Louise Keith. Some of these participants were local children enrolled as special students for instruction in music and/or elocution.<sup>28</sup>

To encourage skill in public speaking two contests were instituted in 1900. The Patten Oratorical Contest, sponsored by John A. Patten of Chattanooga, was held annually on Washington's Birthday and offered a first prize of fifteen dollars and a second prize of ten dollars. Another yearly competition, with similar prizes, was the Annis Debate Contest.<sup>29</sup>

A number of changes were to come about when the Athens campus lost university status and became the Athens School of the University of Chattanooga.

## CHAPTER 5

### STRUGGLES AT HOME AND ABROAD: 1907-1919



**“Soldiers of Christ, arise,  
And put your armor on.”**

*- Charles Wesley*

Loss of degree-granting status as the Athens school became an adjunct of Chattanooga University keenly disappointed its staff and supporters. In an attempt to lessen discontent felt by Athenians at the prospect of being only a high school, President Race agreed to permit three different two-year courses beyond the preparatory level.

In conference with Dean Wright and Professor Bolton, Race accepted plans for these curricula which awarded diplomas rather than degrees at their completion. A Classical Diploma Course stressed Latin and Greek along with classes in English literature, German or French, science, mathematics, and social studies. The Scientific Course gave heavier attention to mathematics, science, and modern languages. The Normal Course, designed to prepare public school teachers, added classes in psychology and education to a basic liberal arts curriculum.

Although collegiate degree programs had been removed from the Athens School, the faculty remained academically strong. The teaching staff of 1908 included three members with the Doctor of Philosophy degree and five with the Master of Arts. While receiving low wages, faculty members exhibited willingness to perform duties beyond those of the classroom. Professor E. C. Ferguson continued to serve as both teacher and librarian. Because of Ferguson's classroom duties, access to the library was originally limited to a few hours daily. Concerned that student use of the library needed enhancement, the faculty ruled that hours be extended to allow library use from 8:15 a.m. to noon and from 1:45 to 4:00 p.m. Volunteers were recruited to supervise the library when Ferguson was in the classroom.

An issue of the student newspaper paid tribute to Professor Ferguson, Ph.D., describing him as a “model Christian scholar.” A native of Vermont, Ferguson held degrees from both the University of Vermont and Boston University, had served as

a minister in New England, and was the author of two books on Latin and Greek literature. Serving in Athens as chairman of the departments of Greek and history, he was described by a colleague as "the best informed man connected with the university, either here or at Chattanooga." Modest and unassuming, Dr. Ferguson once preached to a country congregation in his usual simple and straightforward language. After the sermon, a member of the congregation, mistaking Ferguson's modesty and simplicity for ignorance, remarked, "What a pity that young feller ain't got an education!"<sup>1</sup>

In the fall of 1909, a popular teacher, Frances Cullen Moffitt, returned to the campus after a year of study in Europe. Miss Moffitt, according to LeRoy A. Martin, "undertook singlehandedly the challenge of providing CULTURE for the students." An accomplished pianist, Miss Moffitt studied at the Metropolitan School of Music, at the Boston Conservatory, and at the University of Chicago, as well as in Vienna. She received an honorary degree from the New York Conservatory in recognition of her contribution to the arts in the South. Often at her own expense, she arranged for performances by visiting musicians which enriched the experience not only of students but of members of the community. She won national recognition as the originator of what she called "sterioptics" which involved the simultaneous viewing of slides and listening to music. Students in Athens were the first on any campus to participate in sterioptics, said by the Victor Company to be "the cleverest of anything of the kind."<sup>2</sup>

The fall of 1909 brought the welcome return of Miss Moffitt from her study abroad but was also the first occasion in several years of the unwelcome absence of Dean W. A. Wright. Wright had announced his resignation the previous July, having accepted the presidency of Grayson College in Wairight, Texas. Wright was an alumnus who had served the Athens school as Latin professor for twenty-five years and as dean for twenty of those years. Although no record has been found of the impetus for Wright's decision, the failure of his valiant struggle to maintain university status for the Athens school doubtless played a role in his departure.

Wright was replaced by Dr. William S. Bovard, dean of the school of theology at Chattanooga, who was named vice-president of the university and administrator of the Athens branch. He and his family moved to Athens, residing in the recently-refurbished Blakeslee Hall.<sup>3</sup>

The combination of a small endowment income with low tuition fees resulted in constant financial problems. President Race was particularly concerned with increasing endowment. He secured the promise of \$150,000 from the General Board of Education based in New York and endowed by John D. Rockefeller. This gift was contingent on the university's raising \$350,000. Race determined to secure this amount by November 1912 and relieved Bovard of his duties in Athens, preferring to have the vice-president's help with the financial campaign. Bovard was replaced, in 1911, by Robert B. Stansell, an alumnus who had joined the faculty as professor of political science and English and who was named dean.



In September 1912, at a reception held in his honor in the University Chapel, Dean Stansell spoke optimistically of the school's future: "The enrollment is fifty percent larger now than it was at this time last year, and next year, when the new dormitory is built and we can take care of all who come to Athens, the enrollment will be 500."<sup>4</sup>

The new dormitory of which Stansell spoke was Petty-Manker Hall, a men's dormitory built during the summer of 1913. Construction of the four-story, brick building was made possible by a generous offer from John A. Patten of Chattanooga to give \$10,000 toward building costs if the citizens of Athens would contribute an equal amount. A campaign led by Bishop R. J. Cooke, an 1880 graduate, successfully secured necessary funding.

Bricks for the dormitory's exterior walls were hauled to the campus from the site of the Grandview Hotel, purchased by the college in 1889 from the defunct Athens Mining and Manufacturing Company. This large structure burned in 1907, but a large number of bricks were salvageable. The new building, dedicated in November 1913, was named in honor of Dr. J. S. Petty and Dr. J. J. Manker, distinguished Methodist ministers and leaders in the Holston Conference.

In addition to bedrooms, Petty-Manker contained a kitchen and a dining room capable of seating 100 students. Female students from Bennett Hall and male students from Hatfield Hall joined Petty-Manker residents for meals. The women of Ritter Home had their own dining facilities. In 1913, room rates at Petty-Manker were \$3.50 monthly, and monthly board cost was \$8.00.

Mention of all loyal members of the faculty and staff who made outstanding contributions to the school's survival and progress would fill several volumes and, unfortunately, is beyond the scope of this study. However, one such person, who died in the fall of 1911, merits special attention. Mrs. F. V. Chapman had been the superintendent of Ritter Home since its opening in 1891. Readers will remember her as the brave figure who faced hostility because of her remarks about the low educational level of her charges and as the strict guardian of those charges against male intruders inside the dormitory's fence. Her dedication to duty won for her not only the respect but the affection of students, faculty and townspeople. She was active in her church and in the local women's organization, the Browning Circle. Her Christian charity found expression in assistance to the sick, the poor, and the prisoners in the local jail. She was buried in her native Ohio, but memorial services were held in Athens both in the University Chapel and in the Methodist Episcopal Church, North (Trinity). Miss Caroline Jenkins became the new matron of Ritter which, in 1912, housed more than eighty young women.<sup>5</sup>

A gift from the class of 1914 added to the campus a concrete arch containing the names of the 1914 graduates. Placed at the campus's southeastern entrance, the arch became a favorite meeting place for generations of students who told their classmates, "Meet me at the arch." At the 1914 commencement exercises, the seniors marched through the arch to the chapel where they received their diplomas. The class of 1915



contributed to the construction of a wall extending from the arch. Another arch was constructed at the northern end of the campus as a gift of the class of 1918.

In 1913, President Race, after sixteen years of service, announced his resignation. He had accepted a position as co-director of the Church North's publishing company. His tenure had been a challenging one, filled with conflict with Athens officials and supporters, but even opponents recognized that he strengthened the university both financially and academically. Formerly one of the most outspoken of Race's critics, Trustee J. W. Fisher wrote to him: "I shall miss you. The University will miss you. Many will miss you who would have stoned you a few years ago. You will pardon me if I say you are the University to me."<sup>6</sup>

After a search lasting almost a year, a new president, Fred Whitlo Hixson, was elected early in 1914. His inauguration in Chattanooga, in October 1914, was attended by the entire faculty and student body of the Athens School. This show of support indicated some reduction of the animosity between the two campuses.

Fred Whitlo Hixson was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of DePauw University with a Doctor of Divinity degree and had served for fifteen years as a minister of churches in Indiana. He was a small man but quite dignified in appearance. While other school officials wore standard business suits, President Hixson preferred frockcoats, striped trousers, and standup collars. His manner was formal and austere, and he took quite seriously his first experience as a college executive. Some students and faculty members found his manner forbidding while others recognized his basic kindness and the sense of humor underlying his stern appearance.<sup>7</sup>

During his tenure as president, Hixson made infrequent visits to Athens, mostly leaving management of the school to the dean and faculty. That this was a source of dissatisfaction to the Athens faculty is indicated by a note in the minutes by the faculty secretary: "President Fred W. Hixson did not appear a single time during the term before the student body in chapel."<sup>8</sup>

The student newspaper, neglected for several years during the Athens-Chattanooga controversy, resumed publication in 1911 as *The Exponent*. Examination of extant issues gives a picture of student activities during the years preceding World War I. The picture is probably incomplete, for, with the positions of editor and treasurer filled by faculty members, contributions by student writers were carefully monitored.

The four literary societies continued to dominate extracurricular activities. An editorial in a 1911 issue of the *Exponent* urged every student to join one of the societies in order to "become accustomed to speaking before people." A society meeting often included a debate, some of the topics being: "Resolved: That the Negroes of the United States should be colonized"; "Resolved: That the Panama Canal should be fortified"; and "Resolved: That moving picture shows should be owned and operated by the church."

The literary societies held regular meetings on Friday evenings, and each gave an annual performance. A presentation by the Knightonians, in February 1911, was a typical program, consisting of: a reading, "Bud's Fairy Tale," by Emma Sue Mayfield;

a duet by Trula Long and Margaret Farrell; an oration by Gladys Moody; a vocal solo by Miss Nankivell; an original essay by Betty Montgomery; a song by the Knightonian Glee Club; and a comic play, "Lucia's Lover."<sup>9</sup>

At the close of the 1910-11 school year, the faculty ruled that the women's literary societies should meet at 3:30 in the afternoon rather than at 7:00 in the evening. Probably too much after-dark contact with male society members was suspected. The students, however, petitioned against the change, and the faculty withdrew the rule.<sup>10</sup>

Miss Frances Moffitt had organized the Moffitt Music Club. In 1911, members were studying an opera at each meeting. In the same year, the *Exponent* announced Miss Moffitt's plan to purchase a victrola for the benefit of the music students. Probably this purchase would be a "Victor talking machine" advertised by Bayless Hardware Company, a store which also dealt in hardware, furniture, wagons, and buggies with rubber or steel tires. The school's music program was further enhanced by a school orchestra which performed at recitals and on other occasions.

Miss Eda Selby, professor of modern languages, organized a French club, "Circle Francais," and a German club, "Der Deutsche Bund." The Y.M.C.A. held Sunday afternoon services at the county jail. Women residents at Ritter Home, in 1912, gave an evening social and candy sale with a net profit of ten dollars. Reporting on a mock election held in Banfield Hall, in October 1912, an *Exponent* reporter stated, "All students were allowed to vote, regardless of sex or other disadvantages." Students supported Theodore Roosevelt over Woodrow Wilson and voted for Ben Hooper as Tennessee governor.<sup>11</sup>

By 1911, the faculty had retracted its rule against baseball games being played away from home. The baseball team played against the Deaf and Dumb School of Knoxville, Milligan College, Maryville College, Washington College, Carson Newman College, Knox County High School, and Tennessee Military Institute, as well as against three Chattanooga schools, Baylor, City High, and Central High.

In these days before emphasis on political correctness, the student sports reporter referred to members of the Deaf and Dumb School's team as the "dummies." The Athens team of 1911 won seven of its ten games.<sup>12</sup>

Football remained a popular sport with outstanding players such as: Roy Martin, Lon Badgett, DeWitt Hampton, Russell Haskew, W. P. Bales, Burton Bovard, A. G. Nelson, and A. H. Keith. Both men and women participated in basketball but were handicapped by the lack of an indoor court. In February 1911, the basketball schedule included a home game against the University of Tennessee's second team. When a heavy storm of snow and rain made an outdoor game impossible, the U.T. team left on the evening train for Sweetwater to play against T.M.I.<sup>13</sup>

The February 1911 issue of the *Exponent* includes a school song, written by Russell Haskew. These words presumably were sung at sports events and at other public gatherings.

Here's to old Athens,  
The pride of Tennessee.  
May she stand forever,  
In my sacred memory.  
She has been here ages,  
She has stood the test.  
Many who have dwelt here  
Are quietly at rest.  
Of all the schools of Tennessee  
The one that is most dear to me  
Goes by the name of U. of C.  
Although I know there's Central High,  
And also Dear old T.M.I.  
But in Athens we wish to die.

For a spirit song, the verse seems to come to a somewhat morbid conclusion, but probably Mr. Haskew was merely struggling for a rhyme!

The legend of Nocatula has long been a part of college tradition. An article in a 1911 issue of the *Exponent* gives credit to Professor Alvis Craig for locating and identifying the site of the grave of the Indian maiden Nocatula and her lover Conestoga. According to the legend, Nocatula died by her own hand when Conestoga was assassinated by a rival. At their burial, an acorn was placed in the dead hand of Conestoga and a hackberry seed in that of Nocatula. From these seeds grew an oak and a hackberry tree with their roots entwined. The trees identified by Professor Craig were located on the western side of the campus, just north of Blakeslee Hall.<sup>14</sup>

Advertisers in the *Exponent*, in addition to the previously mentioned Bayless Hardware, include: Foree's Drug Store; Horton Brothers, Druggists; Gettys and Hughes, Fine Millinery; G. F. Lockmiller, Grocer; and H. A. Vestal and Brothers Clothing. The first advertisement of a movie theater appears in a 1913 issue where the Picto Theater announces the showing of "high-class motion pictures that are instructive as well as entertaining." Admission was five cents for children and ten cents for adults.<sup>15</sup>

An event not mentioned in the *Exponent*, but of concern to the faculty, was a conflict between the male literary societies. The Athenians were accused of sabotaging a Philomathean meeting by throwing stones and cutting wires, leaving the Philo Hall in darkness. Athenians seen lurking in the vicinity of the disturbance included Thomas Hunt, Rollo Emert, Roy Johnson, Paul Norton, and Dick Bayless. Lacking proof, the faculty took no punitive action, but the Philos vowed revenge.<sup>16</sup>

A memorial service on April 4, 1912, honored Robert Love Taylor who had died in March at the age of sixty-one. One of the East Tennessee Wesleyan's most distin-

guished alumni, Taylor went on to become a congressman, senator, and Tennessee's governor. He had attended East Tennessee Wesleyan from 1871 to 1874 while his father, Nathaniel G. Taylor, pastured the Methodist Episcopal Church, North (Trinity). Robert L. Taylor was a classmate of Professor David Bolton who, by 1912, had taught at his alma mater for almost forty years.

The need for a gymnasium is mentioned in almost every issue of the student newspaper and frequently in the faculty minutes. In 1915, the faculty made an urgent request to the trustees for the building of a gymnasium. When the response was not favorable, the faculty voted to discontinue the women's basketball program until a suitable place for games was obtained.<sup>17</sup>

The rumbling of European guns of war may have seemed far away to students and faculty on this largely peaceful, rural campus, but when the United States declared war, in April 1917, drastic changes were inevitable.

Speaking at the school's fifty-first commencement exercises, in May 1917, President Hixson took as the text for his baccalaureate address "Deep calleth unto deep." Noting that calls come to the individual from the worlds of finance, business and politics, he added, "Today the country is calling the young men to arms. Some seem to heed it not, but the flower of our youth will answer." Dr. Hixson announced with pride that eighty percent of the eligible student body at Athens and at Chattanooga already had responded to the call of the colors. At this commencement of the Athens School, only nine students received college diplomas, four of whom were boys. Of the seven graduating from the preparatory school, two were boys.<sup>18</sup>

A large flagpole was erected on the campus by the graduating class of 1917, and its base was used as a platform for speakers on Registration Day, June 5, 1917, when a crowd from the community gathered for patriotic exercises. During the summer of 1917, 250 members of the National Guard used the campus as a campground with the bathing facilities at Petty-Manker Hall made available to them. In recognition of the need for food conservation, the school offered a short summer course in canning and drying which enrolled about fifty participants. The sewing room at Ritter Home was opened to women of the community who were making garments for the Red Cross.<sup>19</sup>

A department of agriculture was established for the training of students in efficient farming practices. A seventy-acre farm near the school was made available for this training and was stocked with horses, dairy cattle, hogs, and poultry. The agriculture professor, Frank C. Grannis, writing in July 1917, pointed out the timeliness of the new program since, he said, "Food, not ammunition will win the war." He explained that special wartime courses would be offered to young women as well as young men, for many women "will be called upon to assume a man's burden on the farm."<sup>20</sup>

School officials concentrated on keeping enrollment as high as possible, stressing to parents and prospective students the increased need for training to meet the challenges of the times. Writing in a church publication, in August 1917, Dean Richard



M. Millard made this plea:

Now approaches the new academic year when college doors reopen. Some young men are doubtful whether to enter under present conditions. There should be no hesitation. Never was the call to self-improvement more compelling. Those who are in their teens now are to have the making over of the world after the war. They must have knowledge, they must have character, and they must have the spirit of Jesus Christ. And the Christian college is the place where all these virtues thrive.<sup>21</sup>

In spite of such pleas, a drastic drop in enrollment was inevitable. In 1916-17, the school's net enrollment was 325 which included students in both the college and the preparatory departments, as well as those in special courses in home economics, business, and music. In 1917-18, the war had not made its strongest impact on enrollment which stood at 312. In 1918-19, the blow came, and the student body dropped to 180, with only 15 students in collegiate courses.

Since all American colleges were experiencing an enrollment crisis, the War Department established a Student Army Training Corps (SATC) for college campuses so that young men might receive both military and academic training. The Athens School applied to be the site of such a corps and expected the application to be accepted, but the arrangement was never completed. During the fall of 1918, an officer of the National Guard was detailed to give military instruction and training on the campus, a program which began on September 23. This arrangement was a temporary one designed to accommodate young men of draft age until the SATC unit was established. With the war ending in November, the SATC program of the War Department was discontinued in December.<sup>22</sup>

In spite of the proposed emphasis on agriculture, the use of the seventy-acre farm apparently was of short duration. President Hixson wrote in July 1918: "As soon as the sum of money is in hand which has been promised by a gentleman in the East, a demonstration farm will be purchased." The farm, which was being used in the summer of 1917, must have been acquired temporarily on the basis of an initial payment with the expected final acquisition never accomplished. There is no mention of a farm in school catalogues after 1918, and the number of agriculture courses was reduced by more than half by 1919.<sup>23</sup>

During the war years, students were involved extensively in the work of the Red Cross, under the direction of Miss Frances Moffitt who added to her duties as music teacher the organization and chairmanship of the local Red Cross chapter. Other student activities were at a low ebb. The four literary societies continued to meet weekly for programs of debate, oratory, musical performances, and extemporaneous speaking, but these sessions frequently were dismissed early so that members might attend a Red Cross meeting. In the men's societies, elections for replacement of officers occurred often as members left school for military service.<sup>24</sup>

The only other official student organizations were the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A.



The student newspaper, which had been renamed the *Gold and the Blue*, apparently discontinued publication during the war years. Athletic programs for men were suspended. The basketball team was reestablished in 1919, but the football team did not play again until 1920. The annual May Day observance, initiated in 1910, continued, featuring games, races, and the traditional winding of the Maypole. Girls learned "folk games," which must under no circumstances be called "folk dances," under the direction of Miss Joy Bayless, in a small laundry building behind Ritter—there was no gymnasium—to the accompaniment of a small pump organ.<sup>25</sup>

Under the watchful eyes of the faculty, students attended classes and, when not in class, observed study hours scheduled for 8:15-11:45 a.m., 1:15-3:30 p.m., and 7:00-9:30 p.m. daily. Students were not allowed to leave the campus during study hours or after 9:30 p.m., except by special permission. Daily attendance at chapel services, held at 8:15, was required of all students and faculty. Church attendance on Sunday was also a requirement. The girls of Ritter Home, wearing their uniforms of dark blue coats and skirts, white blouses, and mortarboard hats, sat together on the left side of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Some social occasions such as taffy pulls, picnics, and hikes were permitted if properly chaperoned. In January 1918, the faculty decided to allow the showing of "moving pictures" each Saturday evening. Card playing, dancing, alcohol, and use of tobacco were strictly prohibited.<sup>26</sup>

Songfests in the dormitories were popular, but even they were restricted. In 1917, the faculty ruled that the singing and use of pianos be confined to the hours between 4 and 7 p.m. on Sundays and that only sacred or "refined or classic" music be performed. Had the Athens School students been trying a bit of the new jazz which had taken the place of ragtime as the dominant musical force on college campuses?<sup>27</sup>

Students, of course, found their own means of entertainment as they always have and always will. One mischievous young man tied to his toe a cord attached to the rope of the chapel bell and, from his dormitory bed, caused a mysterious tolling of that bell throughout one night. Students were not infrequently called before the faculty to answer such charges as card playing, smoking, or practical jokes. One group of young men caused considerable faculty discussion in 1917. The boys had formed a secret society, known as "Ace of Diamonds," which had as its purpose making disturbances in Petty-Manker Hall. They were under oath not to tell on each other, the group's password being, "I don't know." They engaged in such activities as throwing bottles, blowing whistles, shooting firecrackers, and throwing stale biscuits, activities which eventually resulted in their suspension.<sup>28</sup>

Just as the Athens School seemed to have achieved some degree of harmony with the Chattanooga University, another blow to Athenian pride came. In a session of the Board of Trustees of the University of Chattanooga, meeting in Chattanooga in June 1918, action was taken removing the two-year collegiate diploma courses from the Athens School, leaving only the preparatory courses. Professor Bolton expressed

the consternation felt by the faculty of the school and its patrons as he wrote, "Many students went to other degree-granting schools. Nothing was left at Athens except preparatory courses, music, expression, and a short business course—as many said, 'only a high school.' Some parents said, 'You have at Athens only a high school—I can send my children to a high school nearer home.'" <sup>29</sup>

In announcing the action of the trustees, President Hixson stressed that the Athens School would have the curriculum of "a high grade academy" with special emphasis placed upon pedagogy and agriculture. He stated that the majority of Athens students came from rural communities and that the trustees were guiding the school into ministering to its constituency in the best possible manner. <sup>30</sup>

Dean Richard Millard resigned due to the conflict of his opinions with those of the trustees. In announcing his resignation, Millard wrote, "I felt, and still feel, that from the standpoints of equity, justice, service, and success, the Athens School should have been enlarged in every way and in every department of work instead of reduced to a school of the grade of an academy and all the college work placed in Chattanooga." <sup>31</sup>

Dean Millard's replacement was James L. Robb who proved to be an exceptionally able administrator. Anxious that the school retain some post-preparatory offerings, Robb sought and obtained the trustees' support for a one-year "normal" course designed for teacher preparation and for a two-year pre-medical curriculum. The program for teachers was given official recognition in 1918 by the Tennessee Board of Education. Its graduates would receive, along with a diploma, a license to teach in the public schools of Tennessee without the requirement of an examination. <sup>32</sup>

The course for teachers immediately met with problems connected with the nationwide epidemic of "Spanish influenza." Classes in Athens were suspended for three weeks in the fall of 1918 because of the illness. Professor A. C. Fleshman, Ph.D., had been elected to take charge of the normal program. Fleshman, according to Professor Bolton, was "a man of ability and long experience in education and normal work." He entered upon his work in the fall but was stricken with the flu just before the beginning of the Christmas holidays, returned to his home in Kentucky, and was never able to resume his work. Other faculty members took over the classes of the normal school for the remainder of the academic year. <sup>33</sup>

Very little seemed to be going well at the Athens School in 1918 and 1919, what with the reduction of post-preparatory courses, the flu epidemic, staffing problems, and the ever-present financial difficulties. The tenacity of Dean Robb is indeed remarkable. Reba Bayless Boyer has recalled that Robb was at least once tempted to give up in despair, but that her grandfather, J. W. Bayless, encouraged him to "hang on just a little bit longer." Robb did hang on and led the school forward to greater success. <sup>34</sup>

## CHAPTER 6

### TRIUMPH AND TRANSITION: 1920-1929



**“And from a land of wars and pain,  
land me where peace  
and safety reign.”**

*- John Wesley*

During the decade of the twenties, the Athens institution made progress under the leadership of two presidents, added two buildings, and made a relatively peaceful transition from a branch of the University of Chattanooga to an independent junior college.

President Fred Hixson resigned, in June 1920, to become the president of Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania. Frank Hooper, dean of the College of Liberal Arts in Chattanooga, served as acting president until the election, in the spring of 1921, of Dr. Arlo A. Brown. A native of Illinois, Brown was educated at Northwestern University and at Drew Theological Seminary. He had held several pastoral charges, had been to Jerusalem as agent of the Board of Foreign Missions, had headed the Teacher Training Board of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and, during the war years, had served as a chaplain in the American Expeditionary Forces. Although President Brown took a more active interest in the Athens campus than had his predecessor, the chief administrative leadership of the Athens School came from its dean, James L. Robb.

The establishment, in 1920, of the Department of Religious Education and Rural Leadership was a further attempt by Dean Robb and his faculty to strengthen collegiate offerings and to serve the school's constituency. The two-year course had as its object the training of young people, especially those aspiring to the ministry, for religious leadership in rural areas.

Teacher training continued to receive strong emphasis. In order to give prospective teachers classroom experience, a building known as the Observation and Practice School was constructed in 1922. This white frame structure, erected at a cost of about \$6,000, was built in accordance with plans recommended by the state for two-teacher rural schools. It contained two classrooms for pupils in grades one through eight, a room for domestic science, and a basement room for manual training. Heat

was furnished by pot-bellied stoves. Four grades were taught in each of the two classrooms.

The only graduate of the teacher-training course in 1922 was Themis Hutsell, later Themis Hutsell Ware, who became a teacher in the practice school and who is remembered as an outstanding Athens educator. In 1922-23, forty-six students were enrolled in the teacher-training program.

Two experienced teachers handled the eight grades with assistance from student teachers. A number of Athens residents can recall their elementary education in the practice school, among them Margaret Hoback Jones who graduated from the eighth grade in 1928 along with one other pupil, Robert Miller. One of Mrs. Jones' fondest memories concerned her graduation dress of white voile and her first pair of high-heeled shoes.<sup>1</sup>

The building of the practice school was made possible by a successful campaign of 1922 which raised \$750,000. In this report to the trustees, in July 1922, President Brown spoke of the excellent response of the Athens community to this campaign and promised that a sizeable portion of the funds would be used for the improvement of the Athens campus. He kept his promise, for, in addition to the practice school, an auditorium-gymnasium was completed at a cost of \$75,619.<sup>2</sup>

The need for a gymnasium had long been felt, and the basement of the new building, completed in 1924, provided a playing area for basketball and seating for 500 spectators. For the sake of economy, the original plan for a swimming pool in the gymnasium area was abandoned. The ground floor was the site of an auditorium with a seating capacity of 800. Administrative offices of the dean and registrar were on the second floor. The present name, Townsend Hall, was not given the building until 1951.

The construction of the auditorium-gymnasium filled a long-standing need and was a source of pride to students and faculty, but there was an element of sadness connected with the event. The new structure was erected on the site of the college chapel which was razed and some of its materials used in its replacement. The chapel had served the school since 1882; its bell had tolled to mark the scheduled times for rising, room inspection, chapel services, classes, and study halls; many memories were attached to the historic building. Its bell was placed in the Old College building when the chapel was razed. The 1924 yearbook contains a poem which expresses some of the feelings attached to the old chapel:

While shadows are stealing far out to the West,  
And voices and fond hearts sink sweetly to rest,  
We'll breathe soft farewell, while birds wing their flight,  
And whisper it gently, "Old Chapel, Good Night!"  
O, the glory of old days! The memories that throng!  
These shall live in our hearts all the glad years along,  
And now in the grayness while soft fades the light,  
We'll echo thy blessings, "Dear Chapel, Good Night!"<sup>3</sup>



During Arlo Brown's tenure, the relationship between the Chattanooga and Athens branches became more amiable. Recognizing that the Athens School wished to have more attention given to its needs, Brown recommended to the trustees that Athens citizens be given greater autonomy in administering the affairs of their school. In 1921, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of the University of Chattanooga approved a resolution that members of the committee residing in Chattanooga should be involved with matters concerning the operation of the school there and that a subcommittee of Athens citizens be concerned with the daily operation of the Athens School. Matters pertaining to general policy and government of the two institutions would remain the responsibility of the entire committee. Named to the Athens School subcommittee were President Arlo A. Brown (ex officio), J. W. Fisher, G. F. Lockmiller, and J. W. Bayless. This decision was a step toward the amiable decision to separate the two schools which came in 1925.

The weakening of the tie between the Athens School and the University of Chattanooga had been in progress for several years as the Athens institution developed its distinctive curriculum and its own leadership. Bishop Wilbur P. Thirkield became the leader in a plan, which was already in the minds of many, for the complete separation of the two institutions. Thirkield, resident bishop of the Chattanooga area and a trustee of the University of Chattanooga, became convinced that the time had come for such action, feeling that each educational unit had a function to perform for a different group of constituents. At a meeting of the Athens subcommittee in May 1925, Thirkield suggested the separation. The matter was referred to the Executive Committee which appointed a special group, consisting of representatives from both Athens and Chattanooga, to present to the trustees a plan for severance. The trustees, at their June meeting, accepted the plan for a new and independent institution to be established in Athens. On June 26, 1925, a charter was issued by the State of Tennessee to a college to be known as Tennessee Wesleyan College. Applying for this charter were G. F. Lockmiller, S. C. Brown, J. M. Melear, J. W. Fisher, W. B. Townsend, C. N. Woodworth, and Mrs. John A. Patten, all of them trustees of the University of Chattanooga who were to serve as trustees of Tennessee Wesleyan. The separation was achieved harmoniously with the realization by the trustees that each of the two schools, in order to fulfill its mission, must be allowed to take its own direction.<sup>4</sup>

When the campaign for endowment was made in 1922, the possibility of such a separation was already being contemplated. A stipulation was then made that should the two institutions cease connection at any time in the future, funds raised by those persons associated with the Athens School should go to the institution in Athens along with a generous portion of the general fund. In accordance with this agreement, the University of Chattanooga turned over to Tennessee Wesleyan \$50,000 of the endowment raised for both institutions along with all the pledges made to the 1922 campaign by members of the Holston and Blue Ridge-Atlantic conferences, these pledges amounting to approximately \$144,000.<sup>5</sup>

Dean James L. Robb was named acting president of the new college and in the



following year, was elected president, his inauguration taking place on October 25, 1926. Robb had served as administrative head of the Athens School since 1918, had successfully led the school through problems connected with curriculum and enrollment, and had promoted a harmonious relationship between the Athens School and the Chattanooga university. As a 1906 graduate of Grant University, a predecessor of Tennessee Wesleyan, he was also an alumnus. He had continued his education by graduate study at Northwestern University and at the University of Georgia and had served as a government supervisor of schools in the Philippines. Robb continued as president of Tennessee Wesleyan for twenty-five years, his career exhibiting complete devotion to the school and to its mission, combined with an unusual talent for raising funds. The latter ability was vital during the twenties and became even more important during the following decade of the Great Depression.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the strong desire of Professor D. A. Bolton and others that Tennessee Wesleyan return to its earlier status as a senior liberal arts college, President Robb wished to take a different direction. Under his leadership, a junior college was instituted with a two-year "diploma course" in the liberal arts. The two-year normal course was retained as was the four-year preparatory school. Preengineering, prelaw, premedical, and preministerial programs were other options available as two-year courses of study. The special departments of piano, voice, violin, art, expression, commerce, and home economics, all of which had successful records, were retained. Tennessee Wesleyan was given full accreditation by the Southern Association of Junior Colleges in 1926 and, in the same year, received official recognition as a standard junior college from the University Senate of the Methodist Episcopal Church. A 1928 publication notes that Tennessee Wesleyan was one of only thirteen junior colleges in the entire South to be fully accredited by the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools of the Southern States.<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Robb's thoughtful leadership included the opinion that the college should not attempt to duplicate the program offered by its sister institution in Chattanooga. He believed that success in its new status would depend upon its retaining the fields in which it was already strong, most notably teacher education, music, home economics, and commercial courses, while adding a liberal arts emphasis especially designed for those students planning to complete their education at a senior college. The 1926-27 catalog was the first to offer justification for such a college:

The junior college offers many special advantages. Perhaps its chief work is in helping every student to find himself before he enters into the large and often confusing life of the university. It bridges the gap between high school and university. The smaller classes, closer supervision, greater contact with the professors, and larger opportunity for self-expression are some of the special advantages offered by the junior college.

Tennessee Wesleyan became a strong and highly regarded junior college, continuing as such until 1954 when it again became a four-year institution.

During the period 1925-1929, the school increased the number of activities available to students, reflected some of the greater freedom demanded by young people in the twenties, boosted its enrollment, began to phase out its preparatory program, increased fees in accordance with the higher cost of living, and continued to experience financial problems.

The number of extra-curricular activities had been sparse during the war years but increased rapidly during the twenties. The literary societies still played an important role in campus life, and members were generally quite serious about their Friday evening programs. Former student Ruth Mac Long Dennis reports, however, that the women's literary societies spent considerable time listening for indications that the men's societies had dismissed so that women and men might meet and walk across the campus together.<sup>8</sup>

The four literary societies were supplemented by other organizations. By 1926, official student groups included the Wesleyan Brotherhood, a club for male students planning to enter the ministry; Latin, Spanish, and French Clubs; the Moffitt Music Club; a Queen Esther Society; and a Mandolin Club, the latter reflecting the great popularity of this instrument during the twenties. Other musical groups were men's and women's glee clubs and the school orchestra. Student publications were the yearbook, the *Nocatula*, and the student newspaper, the *New Exponent*. By 1928, the Wesleyan Service Club, for girls interested in church-related vocations, and the Ink Pot, an honorary literary society, had been added. Debating remained a popular activity.<sup>9</sup>

The senior class gave a spring play and, in 1928, a Negro minstrel show. Such activities as picnics, chestnut hunts, taffy pulls, and movie parties were favorite amusements, the faculty insisting that all be properly chaperoned. The tradition of an all-school outing to Tellico Plains for a full day in May was established in 1928 and remained a custom for several years. Rules remained strict; the University of Chattanooga permitted dancing parties, if supervised by faculty members, as early as 1920, but Tennessee Wesleyan continued to frown on such frivolous and morally questionable activities.<sup>10</sup>

Students began to request clubs of a more social nature than the literary societies, and sororities and fraternities came into being in the late twenties. Whether such societies should be permitted was the subject of considerable faculty discussion, but, in 1929, the faculty voted to recognize such groups if they had faculty sponsors and faculty-approved constitutions. Four sororities, Gamma Gamma, Signa Tau Sigma, Pi Nu Lambda, and E.T.C., and one fraternity Phi Pi Phi, began to operate as local societies, with all working toward national affiliation. College fraternities and sororities were in their heyday in the twenties, and Tennessee Wesleyan reflected this trend.<sup>11</sup>

The athletic program was revived after the war with strong teams in football, baseball, and basketball. According to Colonel Robert C. Hornsby, a member of the baseball team, little emphasis was placed on eligibility of players in the selection of these early teams. "If they were enrolled in school, they were eligible to play, regard-

less of previous education, class attendance or minimum grades.” Hornsby recalled the recruitment of “Happy” Maxwell from the textile mill baseballers. Happy had finished only a few years of elementary school but was enrolled in a typing class at the college because he was a good pitcher. When the team went to Chattanooga for a series of games with McCallie School, Happy’s teammates attempted to keep him in the background, fearing that his lack of social graces and his homespun grammar would not blend well with the McCallie students and faculty. Happy kept a low profile until, at about 2 a.m. on the second night of their sojourn in Chattanooga, he complained in salty language that the city streetcars were keeping him awake and giving him a headache. To his awakened teammates he announced loudly, “I’m gonna git out and find me a drug store so I kin git me a dose of bruno excelsior,” the remedy required being Happy’s version of bromoseltzer. Happy seems to have become something of a legend. Reba Bayless Boyer recalled another occasion when the team was on tour and its members bought and were reading copies of the local newspaper. Happy followed suit, but his fellow players discovered that the paper he was “reading” was held upside down!<sup>12</sup>

The faculty and administration, usually quite serious about academic and social standards, must have relaxed their normal vigilance so that the athletic program could get underway again in the early twenties. Later in the decade, however, athletes were required to have a passing record in at least twelve hours of college work or in three preparatory school courses.<sup>13</sup>

Swann Burnett Boyer was one of the football team’s most valuable players but earned his lasting nickname of “Bullet” because of his speed on the baseball team. Another outstanding football player of the late twenties was Rube McCray who was to serve as a memorable football coach at Tennessee Wesleyan during the following decade. With these and other strong players, the baseball team, the football team, and the men’s and women’s basketball squads achieved notable records. In 1927 the football team was undefeated, and in 1929 the men’s basketball squad was the runner-up for the championship of the Southeastern Athletic Association of Junior Colleges. The fledgling track team’s record, however, was less distinguished. In a meet in Chattanooga, the team placed third out of three entrants, and the next day a headline by a Chattanooga sportswriter read, “Athens Also Ran.”<sup>14</sup>

At the athletic contests, students lined up on the field for the popular “snake dance” of the twenties and rooted for the school team with a college yell which, however lacking in literary distinction, was certainly spirited.

Boom-a-lack-a	Chick-a-lack-a
Boom-a-lack-a	Chick-a-lack-a
Bow-Wow-Wow!	Chow-Chow-Chow!
Boom-a-lack-a, Chick-a-lack-a	
Gold and Blue!	
Athens, Athens, Rip-Rah-Zoo!	

Sung at the games was "Our Dear Old College" with words by Eda Selby, the modern languages teacher, and set to the tune of "Stein Song." Rudy Vallee popularized the University of Maine's "Stein Song," and it became a favorite tune on college campuses throughout the nation.<sup>15</sup>

Attending a conservative school in a conservative community, Tennessee Wesleyan students were little affected by behavior trends which caused the decade to be called the "Roaring Twenties." Perhaps one might say that the twenties did not "roar" on the Athens campus but did "rumble" faintly. Records of the period show some indication that students were beginning to be bit less docile, to question authority, and even, in very mild ways, to rebel against the rules set down by their elders. They began, in 1926, to elect representatives to a Student Council which, although given very limited power, was a beginning in student government. A student writing in the *New Exponent* asked:

Why can't an organization or a class invite people to their socials if they deem it wise? Of course, it is taken for granted that we have plenty of chaperones. We always do. Is that a fair proposition? I think more complete cooperation between the students and the faculty could be secured if they were to give us a little more liberty or at least trust us and give us a chance to prove to them that we are trustworthy.

In 1927, seniors petitioned for more privileges, and the faculty agreed that senior men with grades of 85 or above in all subjects should be allowed to arrange their own study hours between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. and be permitted to leave the campus during these hours without special permission. Senior women with the required grades were given similar privileges except that the hours to be at their command were from 8 a.m. until the evening dinner hour.<sup>16</sup>

The faculty had always experienced some difficulty in the maintenance of the school's strict discipline, and problems connected with chapel attendance became particularly prevalent during the late twenties. Stringent rules were formalized to deal with this mounting problem. When a student had accumulated three unexcused chapel absences, his or her parents would be notified by the dean; five absences resulted in the loss of one term hour of college credit or one-fourth high school unit; eleven absences meant the suspension of the student for the remainder of the term.<sup>17</sup>

Some students absented themselves from study halls as well as from chapel and seemed more daring in their participation in unorthodox activities. A number were reported to be "loitering" on the campus and in the town during evening study hours, and, because of some Sunday tennis games, Dean Wallace Miller reminded the student body that it was "against the policy of the institution to participate in Sunday sports." Dean Miller also reported to the faculty that he had called the attention of the Athens Police Department to the fact that some students were visiting the pool room and that he had asked for police assistance in stopping this unapproved activity.<sup>18</sup>



The students of the twenties were becoming less docile and less in awe of their elders, in their own small way reflecting a national trend. On April 1, 1924, about one-half the student body simply walked off the campus to pursue their own pleasures and were "campused" for three days as a result. When Dean Miller went to a men's dormitory for an inspection, he received a wet reception, a bucket of water having been placed over the door. Students engaged in "mock faculty" programs in which they satirized their elders. Members of the Philomathean Literary Society, in 1926, issued a declaration of independence, stating their right to participate or not to participate in any school-sponsored debating, oratorical, or declamatory contests.<sup>19</sup>

The faculty felt compelled to tighten its censorship of public performances and school publications. A play, "The Patsy," provoked much discussion in 1928, and a rule was made that all public performances were to be viewed in advance by a special committee of the faculty. All material for the yearbook and the student newspaper was to be submitted for approval before publication, but, in 1929, the faculty sponsor reported that students were not complying with this rule.<sup>20</sup>

Student publications indicate that the young people of this era were less pious and didactic than their predecessors and more inclined to voice complaints. Although the faculty feared that the growth of extracurricular activities was detrimental to the academic program, students deplored the scarcity of such activities. Another favorite complaint was directed at the food served in the dining halls. The ever-present applesauce at the tables of Petty-Manker was the subject of derision, but, in 1928, the cereal Post Toasties (dubbed "elephant dandruff") was said to be running the applesauce a close race. Students suggested that a sign be placed over the Petty-Manker dining room door, reading, "Blessed is he that expects nothing for he shall not be disappointed."<sup>21</sup>

The popularity of practical jokes can hardly be used as an indication of unusual student daring, for such pranks had always been prevalent in this school where extremely strict rules seemed to provoke them. An outlet for youthful energy and high spirits must be found somewhere. Pickets often disappeared mysteriously from the fence surrounding Ritter Hall. Dean Miller, again checking a men's dormitory, was horrified to find a pint liquor bottle which had been planted there in anticipation of his visit, but the contents proved to be kerosene. References in the school paper to "pie hunts" are puzzling to the uninformed reader but have been explained by the late Howard Dennis. A new boy on campus was taken on a pie hunt as an initiation rite. He would be told that the girls at Ritter had baked a batch of pies and had invited young men to come and partake. One of the jokesters was stationed in the evening near the door of the Ritter furnace room, and the other pranksters led the greenhorn toward the hall. When they approached the dormitory, the "guard" gave chase and all took flight, the new student believing he was about to be apprehended by some official watchman. After a merry chase all over the campus, the pranksters explained the trick.<sup>22</sup>



Halloween was a favorite time for pranks, and Howard Dennis shared a story of a memorable Halloween. The college authorities knew that pranks were likely to occur and had provided for shifts of student guards. One of these guards was persuaded to leave his post earlier than his assigned hour of departure, and at 2 a.m., Dennis and three other boys began to shift props. A hay rake was placed on the auditorium steps, benches from the football field on the auditorium stage, the bell of Old College in Professor Douglass' classroom, and a buggy on the porch of Bennett Hall. While only four boys moved the bell, seven men were required to replace it in its rightful position, a fact remembered with pride by Dennis more than sixty years later!<sup>23</sup>

The faculty was generally tolerant of occasional bursts of high spirits, but some offenses called for retribution. The most common punishment was the imposition of a "campus," meaning that the student could not leave the campus for a specified period. Since a number of students were local and lived at home, a campus was difficult to enforce in their cases, but these students, in theory at least, were not to leave their homes except to attend classes. Emma Sue (Susie) Williams recalled being campused for being one of a group riding in an automobile down the central walk of the campus, and Reba Bayless Boyer was penalized for "matching pennies," a clear violation of the school's rule against gambling.<sup>24</sup>

The era of the twenties saw a steady growth in enrollment. Such growth may be attributed in part to the increased interest in high school and college education after World War I, in part to the general prosperity of the period, and, in large part, to the efforts of President Robb and his faculty in recruitment and in the building of the school's justifiably fine reputation. Average enrollment from 1906 to 1925 was 292; from 1925 to 1928, it was 397. Growth is particularly evident in the last half of the decade as the following enrollment figures indicate: 1925-26, 287; 1926-27, 396; 1927-28, 519; 1928-29, 498. The percentage of students in the preparatory school declined, for emphasis was being placed on building an outstanding junior college. In 1920-21, 61 percent of those enrolled were in pre-college courses. By 1925-26 the percentage had dropped to forty-six, by 1926-27 to thirty, and by 1927-28 to twenty-four. In 1928-29, the school began to phase out the preparatory program which was eliminated in 1933.<sup>25</sup>

Fees were gradually increased. In 1917-18, the average cost per student for tuition, room, and board was \$101; by 1928-29, this cost had mounted to \$350. Such a change may reflect, to some degree, the increased prosperity of the American people during the twenties. It should be remembered, however, that Tennessee Wesleyan still drew many of its students from rural areas where farmers had little, if any, share in such prosperity. For this reason, fees remained low in comparison with those of the average private school, and financial aid for students received increasing attention. A few scholarships were available before 1925 but no work programs. In 1925, Mrs. John A. Patten of Chattanooga contributed funds to be used for providing employment for deserving students, and, in 1926, the W. B. Townsend Workshops began to give jobs to selected students who might earn up to \$200 each.<sup>26</sup>

Among its various problems, Tennessee Wesleyan could not list the perils of prosperity. Fees paid by students covered about forty percent of the actual cost of their education. The Board of Education of the Methodist Episcopal Church contributed toward the remainder, and there was some income from a \$50,000 endowment, but the school was operating in the late twenties under a deficit of approximately \$10,000 annually. A committee of the board of trustees studied the situation and announced that \$32,000 would be needed before the end of the 1927-28 term to pay existing obligations and to cover the anticipated deficit. A Forward Movement fundraising drive was launched in 1928 with a goal of \$500,000. The campaign received an initial gift of \$25,000 from Mrs. John A. Patten and a like amount from Colonel W. B. Townsend; both of these donors had served as trustees and were generous and devoted friends of the institution. Students helped in mailing requests for gifts and, organized by classes, personally visited homes throughout the area to solicit funds. The men's glee club performed at churches and campaign meetings as well as on radio programs broadcast from Chattanooga and Knoxville. Interested supporters came from as far away as Pittsburgh, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Iowa and Nebraska to assist in fundraising. The committee heading solicitation of funds in Athens was made up of J. B. Elliott, Rhea Hammer, and Tom Sherman. By December 1928, a total of \$297,062 had been subscribed, but the nation soon afterward entered an economic depression, and only a small portion of the amount pledged was ever received. Tennessee Wesleyan, like other schools throughout the country, was to face truly hard times.<sup>27</sup>

It was during the twenties that the college adopted its official seal. In 1926, a competition invited students to submit designs for a school seal. In the following year, the faculty selected a design featuring a torch and wreath with the motto "lux et veritas" (light and truth). At the base of the seal are oak and hackberry leaves, a reference to the Indian maiden Nocatula who died beside her white lover. According to the legend, an oak tree on the campus grew from the heart of the slain lover and a nearby hackberry tree from the heart of Nocatula.<sup>28</sup>

To mention individually the many competent and dedicated teachers who contributed to the life of the college would extend this study beyond a reasonable length. Anyone interested in the preservation of the college's rich history, however, owes tremendous gratitude to Professor David A. Bolton, and it seems appropriate to give him special attention. Bolton was a member of the class of 1872, the second class to graduate from East Tennessee Wesleyan. He served as a teacher of mathematics from the time of his graduation until 1920, a total of 47 years. Even then his active service did not end, for he continued to serve as one of the most dedicated of the trustees. Bolton was the faculty secretary for several years, faithfully recording the discussions and transactions of the faculty. Far from being an objective reporter, he frequently enlivened these records by the expression of his own strong opinions. Bolton was interested in preserving the past of the school he loved as well as in promoting its present and future development. His unpublished memoirs, as well as many handwritten

notes on people and events connected with the school, are preserved in the college's archives and are invaluable sources for the historian.

In October, 1928, the college paid special tribute to Professor Bolton and to another distinguished retired professor, W. A. Wright. Wright, a member of the class of 1878, served the school for 21 years as the academic dean and subsequently as a trustee. A portion of a statement written by Wright for a special bulletin of 1928 seems an appropriate closing for this chapter. Professor Wright wrote:

This institution from its very founding has held a unique place in the educational history of this section of the South. I do not say that its faculty was the best nor its physical equipment the most complete, but I do say that the teachers were devoted to their work and that they gave not only their time, but themselves, as an investment in human life and character. Its work must continue! O friends, its work **MUST** continue!<sup>29</sup>

These seemingly prophetic words were written on the eve of the Great Depression which brought to the institution one of its most difficult periods, a period when it often seemed likely that the school's important work might not continue.

## CHAPTER 7

### SURVIVING THE GREAT DEPRESSION: 1930-1939



**“Lord of the harvest, hear  
Thy needy servants’ cry.  
Hear our faith’s effectual prayer,  
And all our needs supply.”**

*- Charles Wesley*

At the time of the 1929 stock market crash, Tennessee Wesleyan was in its fifth year of operation as a junior college independent of the University of Chattanooga. Still in a transition period, the college found itself ill-prepared for an additional blow to its weak financial condition. Unfortunately, many of those pledging support during the 1928-29 campaign found themselves unable to meet their commitments. A number of small colleges were forced to close during this time of crisis, but Tennessee Wesleyan managed to weather the storm. Its survival in spite of problems arising during the Great Depression seems nothing short of a miracle. But faith brings about miracles, and President Robb and the dedicated men and women of his faculty were persons of faith.

The college’s shaky financial condition became even weaker when enrollment began to decline. The cost of a college education was beyond the means of a sizeable number of young people who might have enrolled during more affluent times. There were 485 students in attendance during the 1929-30 academic year with a slight decrease to 457 in 1930-31, but enrollment dropped to 302 in 1931-32, a loss of almost one-third of the student body in only one year. By 1934-35, enrollment had reached its lowest figure, 283, and during the thirties never grew beyond 345.<sup>1</sup>

A further indication of the need for families to curtail expenses is the sharp decline in the number of special students enrolled at the college for private lessons in music and elocution. Such instruction was available not only to regular college students but to others in the area, particularly to children of elementary school age. In 1929-30, students receiving music lessons numbered fifty-two with forty-one being instructed in elocution or “expression,” as it was then called. In 1930-31, the number of special music students had declined to thirty-six and the number of expression students to fourteen. In a period when parents were finding it difficult to supply their



children with food and clothing, lessons in music and expression were frills which had to be cut from the family budget.<sup>2</sup>

In an attempt to accommodate students struggling with unprecedented financial problems, the college adjusted its rates. Tuition remained at \$35 per quarter until 1939 when it was raised to \$40 quarterly. Fairly sizeable reductions, however, were made in charges for housing and meals. The average cost per student for tuition, room, and board totaled \$363 for the school year 1930-31. The 1931-32 year saw this amount reduced to \$315. President Robb announced a further reduction for the 1932-33 term, describing this action as "an effort to adjust to present conditions and to do all within our power to enable young men and women to attend college." Rates at Ritter Hall were lowered by 18.7 percent and by 12 percent at other dormitories. President Robb stressed that lowering of rates did not mean lowering of academic standards. These, he said, were to be preserved at a high level "in spite of all obstacles."<sup>3</sup>

The preparatory school experienced a drastic decline in enrollment and was closed in 1933. This decision came as part of the effort not only to economize but to focus on a strong junior college program.

Hatfield Hall, the men's dormitory built in 1884, was another casualty of the Depression. In need of extensive repairs which the budget would not permit, the building was razed in 1932 and the materials sold for \$100. A smaller dormitory, Robeson Hall, was closed during the Depression years. This two-story frame building, located on North Jackson Street adjacent to Blakeslee Hall, had been purchased from the Robeson estate and used as a residence hall from 1926 until its closing. Originally housing women students, Robeson accommodated men from 1933 to 1936, this change doubtless necessitated by the demolition of Hatfield.<sup>4</sup>

At a faculty meeting held early in 1932, a special committee reported on possible means of balancing the budget. According to the report, the average annual salary of full-time instructors was \$1,718, approximately \$330 lower than the average salary at seventeen other junior colleges surveyed. Nevertheless, the committee recommended the contribution to the college by each employee of ten percent of the last four salary checks received in 1932. Those receiving other benefits, such as housing and board, as a part of compensation were to donate ten percent of the value of such benefits. The committee noted that such contributions were proposed as "a means of doing our share in meeting the extraordinary situation" faced by the college. When brought to a vote the proposal was adopted by the faculty with only one abstention but was amended to exempt employees receiving annually less than \$500 in cash or other benefits.<sup>5</sup>

At a later 1932 faculty meeting, the business manager reported that funds had not arrived from the Board of Education of the Holston Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and that monthly checks would be issued late. A few checks, he said, might be issued to those to whom the immediate receipt of salary was "absolutely necessary."<sup>6</sup>

Since not only college employees but also business and professional townspeople



were in financial straits, the college offered a barter system in 1933. Persons owing money to the college for tuition, for other benefits, or in endowment pledges could make credit available to college employees. The value of the goods or services received by the employee would be deducted from his or her salary, and the cooperating business or professional person would receive an appropriate deduction in his account with the college. For example, a college teacher could buy a shirt, valued at \$1.95 at Thomas Clothing Company. The merchant would have \$1.95 deducted from his debt to the college, and the teacher's salary would be reduced by the same amount. No money changed hands, a satisfactory arrangement since little money was available. In 1933, the faculty agreed to contribute one-half of a month's salary to operating expenses. In the same year, trustees ruled that if receipts fell below expenditures, salaries of all employees were to be reduced in an amount ranging from ten to twenty-five percent, with the percentage to be determined on the basis of job classification.<sup>7</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Myers arrived at Tennessee Wesleyan in August 1934 to serve respectively as professor of religion and as library assistant. Mrs. Myers recalled that their move to Athens came as the result of the closing of a Methodist junior college in Chicago where they had taught since 1927. Mr. and Mrs. Myers had been promised housing in a small college bungalow. Upon their arrival, they discovered that their prospective home was being used for the storage of potatoes; they stored their furniture and lived in Ritter Hall until the little house was ready for occupancy.<sup>8</sup>

Mrs. Myers described their "rudest awakening" as being the discovery that payment of salaries was four months in arrears. Before they knew of this situation, the couple had spent most of their meager savings on a cooking stove, water heater, refrigerator, and coal-burning heater. By practicing rigid economy, they were able to survive until Thanksgiving when they received one-half of their stipulated salary with another half-check coming at Christmas. Mrs. Myers sewed dresses and suits for townspeople and for a few faculty wives to provide money for groceries and utilities.<sup>9</sup>

By the spring of 1935, conditions were apparently improving somewhat, for the faculty was assured that salaries for the year would be paid in full. However, the faculty again voted to return a portion of their wages to the college, in this case, ten percent of one month's salary.<sup>10</sup>

Representatives of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools had visited the campus in 1931. Accreditation by this body was renewed, but the association urged that several deficiencies be addressed. These included: the need for a larger library, strengthening of the religious education department, adjustment of teaching loads, increase in faculty salaries, a faculty retirement plan, increased income, and the employment of a full-time superintendent of grounds. The addressing of most of these needs had to be put on hold due to lack of finances. The need for a library was felt to be paramount, and continuing efforts were made toward this goal.<sup>11</sup>

In 1931, President Robb spoke to the trustees concerning the inadequate library facilities, urging them to make a library building a priority in their solicitation and

dispersal of funds. Colonel W. B. Townsend responded by pledging \$25,000 toward construction of the building if an additional \$20,000 could be obtained. The trustees promptly accepted his offer and voted to name the proposed building the W. B. Townsend Library. A worsening economic situation, however, caused the trustees to abandon the attempt to raise additional funds, and, in October 1934, Colonel Townsend announced that plans for the proposed building were postponed.<sup>12</sup>

President Robb was exceptionally active and adept in fundraising and traveled extensively seeking support. His travels in 1934 included a few days in Cincinnati and ten days in New Jersey and New York. From the Cincinnati trip he acquired \$300 in donations. In New York he met with Mr. and Mrs. Henry Pfeiffer who had gained considerable wealth through their cosmetic manufacturing industry and were sharing their good fortune with educational institutions. Robb's first contact resulted in a gift of only \$200 but was the beginning of greater munificence. The Pfeiffers' interest in the college grew to the extent that, in 1935, they agreed to supply funds both toward current operating expenses and toward the reduction of the deficit. After the death of her husband in 1939, Mrs. Pfeiffer's benevolence increased to the point that she eventually contributed \$441,666 toward college needs. A generous gift in 1939 made possible the construction of the long-awaited new library which would be completed in 1941 and named the Merner-Pfeiffer Library in honor of Annie Merner (Mrs. Henry) Pfeiffer.<sup>13</sup>

During the thirties other sizeable donations improved the college's financial status. Among these were 1,260 acres in Scott County deeded to the college by E. B. Buskirk of Huntington, West Virginia. This land had an assessed value of \$8,500. Nineteen acres received from the estate of John W. Bayless were sold to J. N. Moore for \$1,250. Some assistance also came from the Carnegie Foundation, chiefly in the form of a grant for the purchase of library books. This grant was certainly welcome since the library's total budget for 1933-34 amounted to fifteen dollars!<sup>14</sup>

Beginning in 1934, some federal assistance for needy students came from the National Youth Administration and from the Federal Relief Administration, both agencies of the New Deal. In a 1935 faculty meeting, President Robb asked for suggestions for projects to be undertaken by students holding federal work grants. In September 1936, it was announced that federal funds had been provided for seven additional NYA workshops to assist "those affected by the drought." The severe droughts coming in the middle of the decade had affected not only the Dust Bowl states but virtually the entire country, a particularly disastrous drought occurring in 1936. A local farm agent recalled not being able to see the sun at midday because of the dust and an absence of rainfall from planting time to harvest. Since most students at Tennessee Wesleyan came from rural families, the unusual weather conditions had added still another obstacle to providing income for a college education.<sup>15</sup>

Small economies and fund-raising projects were customary during these lean years. In 1930, there was considerable discussion by the faculty of the need for new hymnals for chapel services, but with no extra funds available, mimeographed copies

of songs were provided in lieu of new hymnals. The faculty was encouraged to read the *Junior College Journal*, but the budget could not cover the cost of a library subscription; each faculty member was asked to contribute twenty-five cents toward this subscription.

Outsiders were, in 1934, asked to pay ten cents for the use of the college tennis courts, a sign being posted on each court indicating that playing tennis on Sunday was not permitted. Sigma Iota Chi sorority raised money for a sixty-dollar scholarship by making a quilt and selling spaces for names embroidered on the quilt for ten cents per space.<sup>16</sup>

Tennessee Wesleyan students had little freedom to spend money in the unlikely event that they had any to spend. Stringent rules forbade card playing, dancing, smoking, or visiting pool rooms. A young man might sit with a young lady in her dormitory's parlor during a designated period on Sunday afternoon. Male and female students could not sit together at the required chapel services. College women could not leave the campus without permission, and men must sign out before leaving the residence hall. In 1936, the faculty voted that "boys who had not abused the social privileges be permitted to call for the girls and take them to church and prayer meeting on Sunday and Wednesday evenings," but this privilege was to be enjoyed in groups, not by individual couples. Not until 1939 did the faculty approve unchaperoned dates to campus affairs, "picture shows," and football games on the McMinn County High School athletic field. In 1939, young women still could not go to town without special permission, but couples might leave the campus unchaperoned during the period from 3 to 5 p.m. on Sunday afternoon, provided they checked out and stated where they planned to go. Alcoholic beverages were, of course, absolutely taboo. In a student newspaper of 1930, student columnist Neal Ensminger wrote: "Wesleyan is surely for the Eighteenth Amendment. Even the fountain at Banfield is bone dry!"<sup>17</sup>

In spite of the college's efforts to prevent unauthorized student activities, one trustee was quite outspoken on the subject in 1934. According to this critic, all sorts of "sins" were rampant, including dancing, smoking, drinking and cursing. In response, President Robb assured the trustees that the student body consisted of an exemplary group of high-minded young people. Only one student had been reported to be under the influence of alcohol, a ministerial student who did not live on campus and who had been denied readmission. In regard to dancing, Robb explained that most colleges, even Methodist colleges, permitted campus dances, but Tennessee Wesleyan still stood firm against this practice. "We do not have a dancing problem except as it relates to students living at home in the town or county," said Robb. "No request has come from students for a dance on the campus nor has any dance been held. We do not feel that it is our right to dictate what parents should allow in their own homes."<sup>18</sup>

No longer were the literary societies the focus of student activities, for interest in these societies declined during the thirties as students became more interested in sororities and fraternities with activities of a less pedantic and more social nature.

The Sappho-Athenian Literary Society, a coed group composed of the combined Sapphonians and Athenians, agreed to forfeit its charter in 1936, and the life of the one remaining society was reported to be at "very low ebb" in 1938. The three sororities and two fraternities were local organizations with the exception of Sigma Iota Chi Sorority, established at T.W.C. in 1931, and Phi Sigma Nu Fraternity which became a chapter of a national junior college fraternity in 1932.

Most of the other student organizations were of a religious nature—the Wesleyan Brotherhood for ministerial students, the Wesleyan Service Club for men and women preparing for full-time Christian service, the Queen Esther Circle for prospective women missionaries, the Y.M.C.A., and the Y.W.C.A.

Musical organizations were also prominent. The glee club, directed by Mrs. Robb, and the orchestra, directed by Miss Catherine Colston, gave a number of performances including a radio broadcast. The Tennessee Wesleyan Girls' Chorus was invited to sing for the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church held in Columbus, Ohio, in May 1936.<sup>19</sup>

Another popular activity was debate, and the college's debate team, coached by Miss Lillian Donelson, had an outstanding record. In 1931, the team won the Junior College Championship of Tennessee and North Carolina, and, in the same year, placed second in the Southern Tournament of the Southern Association of Colleges, defeating such formidable opponents as Louisiana State University, the University of Florida, and the University of South Carolina. Star debaters were Sam Adkins and Neal Ensminger.<sup>20</sup>

Some trustees felt that intercollegiate athletics should be discontinued in order to conserve funds during the Depression years. Their suggestion was rejected, and athletic teams of the thirties were among the most outstanding in the school's history. Strong school spirit supported the basketball teams (men and women), the tennis team, and the football team, the "Bulldogs." In 1935, the Bulldogs, coached by Rube McCray, were defeated only by the University of the South and by Middle Georgia and in 1938 won the Southeastern Junior College championship for the sixth consecutive year. Also in 1935, the mens' basketball team took home the first-place trophy from the Southeastern Junior College tournament.<sup>21</sup>

Although college authorities frowned on dancing and card playing, movies, called "picture shows," apparently did not come under censure. On January 14, 1935, the faculty ruled that students who did not have classes on Wednesday at 10 a.m. might attend the morning showing of "Great Expectations" at the Strand Theater, admission ten cents. An especially popular film of 1930 was "Sunny Side Up," advertised by the Strand in the student publication, the *Nocatula*, as "the screen's first original all-talking, singing, dancing musical comedy with Charles Farrell and Janet Gaynor."<sup>22</sup>

The pleasures of students of the Depression years may seem quite unsophisticated to modern young people, but that generation found amusement in simple things. The big social event of the year was the school picnic held each May in the mountains near Tellico Plains for which the school rented a railroad car for transportation.



In the summer of 1930, students made an afternoon trip to Craighead Cavern near Sweetwater and also traveled by school bus to view a performance of *Macbeth* at the University of Chattanooga auditorium. This latter event was a momentous occasion since students were allowed to be out until 2 a.m.! On the bus they sang such popular favorites as “Keep Your Sunny Side Up” and “Carolina Moon.”<sup>23</sup>

Judge Fred Puett recalled an amusing incident connected with the 1932 May Day excursion to the Tellico mountains. When the group arrived by train at Tellico, they dispersed to enjoy themselves in the mountain scenery, it being firmly understood that when the whistle blew, everyone was to return promptly to the train. One group of boys heard the whistle and realized that they had wandered such a distance away that they would find it difficult to return on time. Attempting to use a shortcut, they found themselves at the edge of a deep ravine which they could not jump across. They solved the problem by swinging across on a tree branch. As they hurried toward their destination, they happened upon two faculty members, a male history teacher and a female religion teacher, who were behaving toward each other in a very friendly manner—“smooching” was Judge Puett’s term. When the history professor later heard of the tree-swinging episode, he said caustically, “Now at last I feel that I can believe in evolution.” One of the tree-swinging students quickly retorted, “And now at last I feel that I can pass history.”<sup>24</sup>

Not all entertainment was scheduled or faculty-approved, for amusement was sometimes sought in unconventional ways. On one Halloween night in the early thirties, a cow was led up the stairs to the third floor of Old College Hall. Since a cow by nature may ascend steps but consistently refuses to descend, it was subsequently necessary to lower the imprisoned animal from the third-floor window by means of a crane. At a faculty meeting in 1937, some male students confessed to having broken light bulbs and a window pane at a women’s dormitory. Another student pleaded guilty to having “left the tacks in President Robb’s chair on the stage while working on scenery.” In 1938, a male student was asked to leave school for throwing water in Petty-Manker Hall. The above incidents constitute only a few examples of the fact that the difficult task of getting a college education was not always approached grimly or with sober countenances.<sup>25</sup>

As one reads through the school records of the hard years of the Great Depression, one is certainly made aware of the serious economic problems faced by the college. However, coming through even more strongly is an awareness of a vivacious and talented student body guided by a well-trained, dedicated faculty under the leadership of a remarkable president.

President Robb’s outstanding leadership was recognized not only locally but in a wider area. He traveled to St. Louis in 1934 to be installed as president of the Methodist Educational Association, and after serving as vice-president of the Tennessee College Association, in 1934, was elected president in 1935.<sup>26</sup>

The school lost one of its most dedicated faculty members in 1932 with the death of Professor David Bolton. A member of the class of 1872, the school’s second



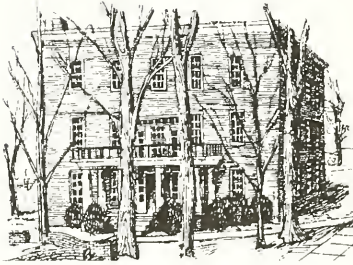
graduating class, Bolton served the college for fifty-two years, the longest tenure of any faculty member in the school's history. His principal role was as professor of mathematics, but he had also, at times, temporarily assumed the duties of vice-president and of dean of instruction as well as serving for many years as faculty secretary. During his lengthy tenure, he witnessed five name changes at the institution. Because of Bolton's deep sense of history, he left behind carefully recorded minutes and personal papers which give invaluable insight into the college's history which could not otherwise be attained.<sup>27</sup>

In spite of financial problems, the school continued to attract well-qualified faculty members. Particularly notable was the addition to the music faculty, in 1939, of Dr. Werner Wolff and Mrs. Emmy Land Wolff. Natives of Germany, the Wolffs had distinguished themselves in concert halls of Germany, Spain, and Italy. They were continuing their careers in New York when they were recruited by President Robb during his travels there. The Wolffs brought new vitality to an already strong music department, and their development of a community choir was an important addition to the musical life of Athens.<sup>28</sup>

In Professor Bolton's minutes of faculty meetings during the Depression years, the reader finds, as would be expected, considerable discussion of financial problems. However, these weekly meetings more often gave prominence to the improvement of instruction and service to students, community, and church. Emphasis on these priorities by a staff characterized by determination and self-sacrifice enabled the college to survive the Great Depression and to maintain its standards of excellence until the present day.

## CHAPTER 8

### WAR AND PEACE: 1940-1950



**“What troubles have we seen,  
What conflicts have we passed,  
Fightings without and fears within,  
Since we assembled last.”**

*- Charles Wesley*

When war broke out in Europe in 1939, Tennessee Wesleyan was beginning to show signs of recovery from the effects of the Great Depression with some improvement both in enrollment and in financial resources. The school would enjoy only a short period of relative prosperity before World War II brought new challenges.

A notable addition to the campus was the new library building completed and dedicated in 1941. As has been previously noted, the fairy godmother who made this longtime wish come true was Mrs. Annie Merner Pfeiffer of New York. When she was apprised by President Robb of the urgent need for a library, Mrs. Pfeiffer expressed willingness to give \$100,000 for a \$75,000 library, the reduction of indebtedness, and the supplementing of endowment funds. She stipulated that the college match her gift in order further to decrease indebtedness and to increase endowment, a requirement met by a fundraising campaign.

After Mrs. Pfeiffer's generous gift made a library building possible, the site chosen was the former location of Hatfield Hall which had been razed in 1932. Mrs. Pfeiffer chose Otis Clay Poundstone of Atlanta as architect and Southeastern Construction Company as contractor. Ground was broken on August 2, 1940, and a cornerstone-laying ceremony, presided over by Bishop Paul S. Kern followed in November. Upon the building's completion in 1941, the dedication ceremony on November 5 had as honored guests Mrs. Pfeiffer, Bishop Kern, and Governor Prentiss Cooper and formally named the building the Merner-Pfeiffer Library.

The exterior of the brick building blended harmoniously with other campus structures, and the spacious interior was aesthetically pleasing with especially beautiful woodwork. The new library was a far cry from the cramped quarters of Old College and of Banfield Hall, previous locations of the library collection. It contained space for 30,000 volumes, furnished offices and workrooms, and had a seating capacity of

150. A special room was designated for the Richard J. Cooke Collection of some 2,500 volumes which had been willed to the college by its distinguished alumnus who died in 1931. Lacking space to house the collection, the college could not bring this bequest to the campus until the completion of the new building.

While the library building was completely modern, at least by 1941 standards, one item from the past was added, the college bell which was hung in the cupola atop the structure. Cast in 1872 by the McNeely Bell Company of New York, the bell weighed 321 pounds and was shipped to the college in December of that year. First placed in Old College and later in the college chapel, the bell, for more than six decades, had summoned scholars to chapel services and to classes and had announced study hours. Today it hangs near the eastern entrance to the campus on College Street.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Pfeiffer's visits to the campus during planning for the library resulted in her financing another building, a residence hall for women. The late Howard Bales recalled that he was working at Miles Riddle Drug Store when Mrs. Pfeiffer first visited Athens. When Dr. Robb came to the drug store, Bales asked him where he planned to lodge the affluent New Yorker. As shrewd as he was personable, Robb had a twinkle in his eye as he replied, "I plan to have her stay on campus." Apparently, Mrs. Pfeiffer's sojourn in Bennett Hall contributed to her decision to donate funds for a new women's dormitory which was exactly what the astute president had in mind.<sup>2</sup>

Bennett Hall and Ritter Hall, both wooden structures built in 1891, required considerable maintenance and were potential fire hazards. The need for better housing for female students had been a concern of college officials for some time. Mrs. Pfeiffer agreed to contribute \$75,000 for the construction of a new dormitory, but since she was a practical businesswoman as well as a generous one, she insisted that college trustees raise another \$25,000 for the endowment fund. Her offer was accepted enthusiastically by the trustees, but Bishop Kern cautioned that, given the economic impact of the Depression, raising more funds would be practically impossible. When President Robb explained the difficulty to Mrs. Pfeiffer, she agreed to an additional gift of \$25,000 but still insisted that the trustees concentrate on increasing endowment.<sup>3</sup>

The new residence hall, funded entirely by Mrs. Pfeiffer, was named Sarah Merner Lawrence Hall in honor of her sister. A handsome, three-story, brick building, it occupied the site of Bennett Hall which was razed by local contractor James Webb who bought the materials. During the new hall's construction, Robeson Hall was reopened to house Bennett residents. Lawrence Hall was completed in 1942 at a cost of approximately \$77,000 including furnishings. Remembering her earlier sojourn in Bennett, Mrs. Pfeiffer included a comfortable suite for visitors in plans for the hall.

While construction of Lawrence Hall proceeded, war was having an impact on campus life. Even before the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, young men were leaving college for military service or to work in war industries. In the fall of 1941, full-time enrollment of 187 indicated a 13 percent reduction from the previous year. The Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, which required the registration of

men from 21 to 35 years of age, did not have a tremendous impact on college students, but when, in 1942, the draft age was lowered to eighteen, male students left in droves. In 1942-43, a student body of 145 had 45 males; in 1943-44, only 14 of 120 students enrolled were males. Prior to the war, Petty-Manker Hall housed three young men in each room. In 1942, twelve rooms were empty, and in 1944, only one male student was living in the dormitory.<sup>4</sup>

Coeds keenly felt the reduction of eligible males. One young lady placed a plea in the campus newspaper for remaining men to resist going steady and to spread their attention around. "Some of the school's prettiest and most charming young ladies are being neglected by the campus swains who date a certain few or go steady," she wrote. "This is an unfortunate situation for both sexes. Variety is the spice of life. Boys, give your attention to as many girls as possible, and watch your popularity star rise."<sup>5</sup>

Due to the shortage of males, football was discontinued in 1942 but prior to that date was a highly successful program. Coached by Rube McCray, President Robb's son-in-law, the Bulldogs won the Southeastern Junior College Championship for the ninth consecutive year in 1940. In the same year, the basketball team, coached by Robert Hooper Eblen, likewise was outstanding, winning the conference championship with seven wins and no losses.

The music program was enriched by the presence of Dr. and Mrs. Werner Wolff who had fled their native Germany to escape political oppression and had joined the college faculty in 1939. The College Chorus, directed by Dr. Wolff, in 1940 included: Gladys Andes, Jean Douglass, Virginia Swanson, Mary Fay Kennedy, Virginia Quinn, Louise Fritts, Bertha Chastain, Norma Stonecipher, Irene Hall, Ernestine Grant, Carolyn Bishop, Fred Jenkins, Felix Harrod, Bill Selden, and Bill Scott. President Robb hoped to build a conservatory of music with the illustrious Dr. and Mrs. Wolff as its nucleus. However, the proposed conservatory was an early casualty of World War II. In fact, due to financial difficulties, the Wolffs were given leaves of absence for the duration of the war at the end of the 1941-42 term. They subsequently resigned and moved to Chattanooga. There they had a great impact on the musical life of the area through their connection with the University of Chattanooga, the Cadec Conservatory, and the Chattanooga Opera Association.<sup>6</sup>

The early forties were dominated by the war effort, its most notable effect being, of course, the steady decline of male students. President Robb fully supported American involvement in the war but urged students to stay in school until drafted, pointing out that after the war unskilled, uneducated workers would be at a disadvantage. He noted that President Roosevelt repeatedly advised students to stay in college and prepare themselves for efficient military service if their country called. Robb asked students to consider various deferment programs offered by the military. However, as war continued, male enrollment inevitably declined.<sup>7</sup>

The college participated in an army, navy, and marine corps recruiting program which allowed potential officers to remain in college until graduation if satisfactory grades were maintained. In addition, an accelerated program was adopted which



made graduation from the junior college possible in one-and-one-half years rather than the normal two years.

Curriculum changes were instigated to accommodate the war effort. The physics department offered courses in radio technology and mechanics. A study of military camouflage was added to the art department's classes. The physical education program placed emphasis on physical fitness in preparation for military service and incorporated training in boxing and self-defense into its classes. The physical education requirement for graduation was raised from four courses to six. In recognition of increased demand for trained secretaries and office workers, the commercial department supplemented its offerings in secretarial science and office practices.

President Robb traveled to Washington, D.C., to apply for the establishment on campus of an army-navy training unit. His attempt, however, was unsuccessful since campus facilities were deemed inadequate for such a unit.<sup>8</sup>

A Campus Defense Council, with both faculty and student representatives, was organized under the direction of Professor T. W. Whitehead. This council implemented a system of air raid warning signals and designated shelter areas. The science faculty offered sessions on protection against poisonous gases. Red Cross courses in first aid, nutrition, and home nursing were attended by both faculty members and students. Many of the faculty were involved in volunteer work for the Red Cross and for the Citizens Service Corps. The latter group was a part of the Defense Organization for the State of Tennessee and consisted of civilian workers organized to coordinate the activities of the war effort.

Like citizens all over the United States, members of the college community responded to the call to buy war bonds and to collect scrap metal and rubber. Students sacrificed soft drinks and Christmas money to purchase war bonds. During ten months of 1942, students and staff collected about 6,000 pounds of metal and rubber, much of this coming from old lockers and a gas machine from the science department. Silk hosiery was, for female students and faculty, another sacrifice necessitated by the war.<sup>9</sup>

Rural McMinn County suffered from the loss of farm labor, and twenty-four male students, supervised by Coach Frank Chaney, volunteered to work on area farms. Such service was an important part of the war effort since the Agricultural Adjustment Agency had called on farmers to increase food production.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to his demanding duties at the college, President Robb played a prominent role in the community. He served as chairman of the McMinn County Red Cross, headed the War Emergency Relief Drive, and frequently promoted the war effort through speeches to school and civic groups.

Robb was extremely generous in his community involvement considering the serious problems facing him on campus. Endowment remained inadequate, enrollment was dwindling, and expenses for heating, lighting, and supplies were rising rapidly. Necessary cuts in staff were made with regret. During the 1941-42 school year, the positions of business manager and field representative were eliminated temporarily.



The matron of Petty-Manker Hall was replaced by a professor who agreed to accept housing as part of his salary. The library was closed at night to reduce lighting and heating costs, a move unpopular with students. In spite of these stringent economies, Robb was forced to announce, in June 1942, that faculty salaries for June and July could not be paid.

President Robb was doing his best, but the trustees insisted on a balanced budget in 1943. Working toward this goal, Robb combined the departments of history and education and gave leaves of absence to four professors. Another reduction of expense was accomplished by Robb's persuading the county board of education to pay the salary of one of the two teachers at the Observation and Practice School.

These economies resulted in a bare-bones budget of \$53,000 for 1943. Always mindful of the need to increase faculty salaries, Robb urged trustees to improve compensation, but the request was denied due to the tight financial situation.

In 1943, Robb completed twenty-five years of college leadership, first as dean and then as president. In speaking to the trustees of a difficult but rewarding period, he modestly paid tribute to the contributions of others than himself. He lauded individuals making large financial donations, including Mrs. J. A. Patten of Chattanooga, Colonel W. B. Townsend of Townsend, and Mrs. Henry Pfeiffer of New York. While not minimizing the importance of those able to make sizeable gifts, Robb stressed the value of the support of others less affluent but no less devoted. Professor E. C. Ferguson, professor of Greek and history for 34 years, willed \$2,000 to the college, this amount being the bulk of his estate. Robb spoke movingly of an early graduate who, while spending the closing years of her life in an "old age home" sent one dollar each year to the college as evidence of her gratitude and devotion to her alma mater.<sup>12</sup>

But the success of the college, Robb asserted, was not due only to financial donations. Every student diligently seeking to further his or her education was the heart of the college's success. The president cited the example of a young man from a poor, mountain family, seemingly unpromising material, who plugged away until graduation from Tennessee Wesleyan, worked his way through two more years at the University of Chattanooga, and now pursued a graduate divinity degree while pastoring a church.<sup>13</sup>

Also, Robb continued, contributions of faculty members should not be ignored. He paid special tribute to the dedication of Frances C. Moffitt who had served the music department for forty-two years and of Eda Selby Melear, a teacher of foreign languages, who was completing thirty-six years of service in spite of the complications of illness during the last two years. Despite reduction in enrollment, finances, and a number of faculty positions, the faculty had maintained high academic standards. Robb took particular pride in the fact that Tennessee Wesleyan graduates who continued their education at senior colleges were found to be well prepared. For example, of the twenty-two students attending the University of Tennessee in 1943, eleven were listed on the honor roll.<sup>14</sup>

Keeping qualified faculty during the war years presented a problem. Several younger men left for military service. Some of those hired to replace them stayed only one year or, in a few cases, left during the school year. A particularly severe blow was the resignation of Dean M. F. Stubbs in 1942. Dr. Stubbs was an outstanding teacher of chemistry and physics as well as an able administrator. He left to accept a higher-salaried position at Carthage College, an example of the need to improve salaries for the retention of qualified faculty. M. R. Richmond, chairman of the biology department, replaced Stubbs as dean. The principal librarian, Frances Mackey, left to serve in the WANC. Claryse Myers was promoted to fill Mackey's position.<sup>15</sup>

Student activities were drastically affected by the declining numbers of male students. The football program was discontinued in 1942, but the men's basketball team struggled on. After Coach Fred Hutsell left for the air force in 1942, the team captain served as coach for the remainder of the year. For the 1943-44 term, C. O. Douglass, education professor, agreed to add the coaching of basketball to his duties. Since the student body included only fourteen males, anyone even mildly interested in the sport could make the team. In spite of being hampered by "no cars, no tires, and no gas," the professor turned coach managed to schedule a few games with nearby colleges, but, not surprisingly, the team's record was less than stellar. A writer in the *Nocatula* gave words of encouragement: "We had a swell coach. Our scores didn't sound like we had a coach, but we really did. Professor C. O. Douglass did a fine job. He gave untiringly of his time and ability in tutoring the lads. He gave the boys much encouragement and made the Bulldogs feel it was not all in vain even if the ole ball wouldn't go in the basket." Of his ability as basketball coach Professor Douglass commented, "There may be worse, but I have never seen or heard of such."<sup>16</sup>

The women's basketball team, with more experienced players, greatly surpassed their male counterparts. Coached by Dean Richmond, the women lost only three games in 1943-44, scoring a season's total of 480 points. In 1944-45, the team was undefeated with outstanding performances by "Izzie" Crowder, Fannie Kate Vaughn, Margaret Beaty, and Captain Jeanne Elliott.<sup>17</sup>

Campus organizations had to adjust to the shortage of males. In the student newspaper, a female staff member wrote: "Wesleyan femininity has managed to settle down and grin and bear it. Men (mostly) are gone but (definitely) not forgotten." The two fraternities, Eta Iota Tau and Phi Pi Delta, suspended operation during the war, but three sororities, Eta Upsilon Gamma, Zeta Mu Epsilon, and Kappa Delta Phi, continued to flourish. The college band, directed by Osmond L. Spradling, sought to compensate for its decline in members by recruiting community musicians. The choir also suffered from the lack of male voices.<sup>18</sup>

The last remaining literary society disbanded in September 1941, not because of the war but because such organizations had outlived their usefulness. Once the core of student activity, the literary societies were replaced by fraternities and sororities and by clubs for those interested in debating, drama, and music and in other extracurricular pursuits.

The campus Religious Council coordinated the activities of such groups as the Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., Wesleyan Student Fellowship, Christian Service Club, and Life Service Volunteers. Perhaps the war had increased the seriousness and Christian commitment of students, for these organizations grew stronger. The Y.M.C.A.-Y.W.C.A. sent to Congress a student petition requesting the prohibition of the sale of alcohol near army camps. The Christian Service Club promoted dormitory prayer meetings and encouraged student use of a Methodist devotional booklet, *The Upper Room*, for private devotions.

In June 1943, the campus was saddened by the death of Frances Moffitt just one month after President Robb's speech to trustees had praised her forty-two years of service to the music department.

A notable event of 1943 was the awarding of degrees rather than diplomas to graduates. After the liberal arts program was discontinued at the Athens School of the University of Chattanooga, completion of two years of college-level work had been recognized by a diploma, and this practice continued after the school had become an independent junior college. Acting upon a recommendation by the faculty, trustees agreed to the awarding of the Associate of Arts degree, with requirements remaining virtually the same as those for a diploma.<sup>19</sup>

The division between Northern and Southern Methodists had ended in 1939 as the two branches united into one national church. This agreement resulted in a single Holston Conference now responsible for three colleges: Tennessee Wesleyan, Hiwassee College in nearby Madisonville, Tennessee, and Emory and Henry in Virginia. Hiwassee and Emory and Henry previously had been sponsored by the Southern church and Tennessee Wesleyan by the Northern branch.

At their 1942 Annual Conference, Holston Methodists asked the Methodist Board of Education to appoint a committee to survey the strengths and needs of each of the three institutions. Three members of the committee visited Tennessee Wesleyan in the spring of 1943. The committee's July report commended the college for the beauty of its campus, the addition of the Merner-Pfeiffer Library and Lawrence Hall, the satisfactory equipment of the science building, and the overall financial condition despite a debt of \$51,000. Improvements recommended included: liquidation of debt, renovation of older buildings, an enlarged curriculum for the music and art departments, and the addition of a student activities center. The committee's report further recommended a conference-wide program to impress church members with the need adequately to support their church-related colleges.<sup>20</sup>

This survey marked the beginning of renewed interest by the Holston Conference in its colleges. President Robb reported that the conference had contributed \$3,600 to Tennessee Wesleyan in 1934 but only \$1,634 in 1937. He asked for increased support, at least \$10,000. He continued to urge better compensation for faculty.<sup>21</sup>

For a short period in 1943, the idea that Tennessee Wesleyan should become an all-female institution received some consideration. This proposal was first suggested by a special commission on education working with the Holston Conference Board

of Education. Records seem to indicate that this commission differed from the committee making the survey previously discussed in that the commission was composed of conference members. Members of the committee making the July 1943 report were selected from the Methodist Church at large. The report of the special commission made three recommendations: (1) the establishment of a single board of trustees and one administrative coordinator for the three Holston colleges; (2) the formation of a unified budget request to be submitted annually for conference approval; (3) consideration by the trustees of Tennessee Wesleyan's becoming a college for women. Commission members doubtlessly reasoned that Hiwassee College, located some thirty miles from Athens, was a coeducational junior college; that Emory and Henry was a coeducational senior college; and that Tennessee Wesleyan could have its own distinctive role by becoming a women's college. Whatever the commission's reasoning, their recommendation was rejected by Wesleyan's trustees.

When trustees met in the spring of 1943, Chairman James Fowler read a letter from the Reverend William M. Dye, a benefactor and former trustee. Dye expressed the opinion that turning Wesleyan into a women's college would be the "death" of the institution. Reasons cited included: decline in enrollment at female colleges; a preference by women to attend coed colleges; and the possible alienation of T.W.C. supporters. After also hearing a petition from the faculty, read by Dean Richmond, expressing preference for a coeducational institution, the trustees voted to delay action until a closer study of the commission's report had been made.<sup>22</sup>

Alumni added their opposing voices. The alumni association, led by its president, L. D. Miller of Chattanooga, launched a letter-writing campaign against the idea of a women's college. Trustees received numerous statements from alumni that their monetary contributions would cease if such a change were made.

Meeting in the summer of 1944, trustees adopted the following resolutions: (1) that Tennessee Wesleyan continue as a coeducational institution; (2) that the Athens college retain its own separate identity with its own board of trustees and administrative officials; (3) that problems be solved by coordinating the programs of the three colleges rather than attempting unification.<sup>23</sup>

At its annual meeting in 1945, the Holston Conference voted that each of the three colleges remain coeducational and that each retain a separate entity with its own resources of endowment and income. A board of thirty-two trustees was to oversee and coordinate the programs of the three institutions.<sup>24</sup>

The annual conference meeting of the following year gave approval to a fundraising campaign known as the United College Movement of the Holston Conference. A goal of \$600,000 was set for the two-year drive, with each college to receive \$200,000. That the Holston Conference intended to take a more active interest in its higher education system was evident.<sup>25</sup>

Due largely to the efforts of President Robb, a faculty pension program was introduced in 1945 through participation in the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association. Payments by a faculty member to a retirement fund would be supplemented



by the college. Previously there had been no provision for faculty members' retirement, and the new program was a much-needed addition.<sup>26</sup>

By the end of the war in 1945, fourteen gold stars had been placed on Tennessee Wesleyan's service flag to memorialize former students who sacrificed their lives. The exact number of those who left the classroom for military service is not known, but 350 alumni were still serving on V.E. Day in May 1945. One hesitates to mention a few when so many distinguished themselves, but a 1941 graduate, Leonard "Bud" Lomell gained national attention when his story was told in Tom Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation*, published in 1998. After graduation from T.W.C. where he was on the football team, Lomell became a part of the Army Rangers, took part in the Normandy invasion and in the Battle of the Bulge, and received the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, the Victory Medal, and the Purple Heart.<sup>27</sup>

The unusual incidence of military service by a father and son, both Wesleyan graduates, occurred in the case of E. W. and William Elrod. Lieutenant E. W. Elrod, a 1919 graduate, held the post of chaplain on an air force base in Texas. Sergeant William Elrod, class of 1940, was a ball turret gunner on the B-24 from which General MacArthur watched his paratroopers land behind the Japanese forces at Lea. The younger Elrod was the winner of four medals and a Presidential Citation. Many other Wesleyan alumni served honorably and with distinction; all were heroes.<sup>28</sup>

When the G.I. Bill provided financial assistance for education to returning veterans, President Robb and his staff already had begun to plan for post-war growth in enrollment. However, they probably did not anticipate the presence, in 1946, of 220 veterans on campus.

In his planning for the arrival of veterans, Robb emphasized the need for more vocational courses. In May 1945, he told the trustees, "We have been warned by various leaders that higher education as we know it is a thing of the past...and that an institution which fails to adjust has little chance of survival." Since Robb believed that veterans would want training to prepare for jobs, seven new vocational courses, mostly in business and science, were added to the curriculum. While supporting an increase in vocational training, both Robb and his faculty felt that the emphasis on the liberal arts should be maintained.<sup>29</sup>

A small number of veterans enrolled in 1945, but the fall of 1946 brought an influx of 220, swelling total enrollment to 531. This sudden growth brought challenges concerning housing and faculty recruitment.

The federal government offered assistance in housing by providing a converted barracks as a dormitory plus trailers for married veterans. Several Athenians opened their homes to veterans who could not be accommodated on campus. Mrs. George A. Cook, whose home was near the campus, provided housing for twenty young men.

The trailer village was located on a hillside adjacent to the present Green Street. A 1946 issue of the student newspaper, then called *The Bulldog*, noted that wives in the trailers maintained a steady routine of washing, ironing, cooking, and housecleaning



with some assistance from their student husbands. "Some of the men have mastered the art of dishwashing while others have specialized in rocking the baby while Mother goes about her chores." Such a division of labor was considered noteworthy in the decade of the forties.<sup>30</sup>

The Veteran's Dormitory, a prefabricated building supplied by the government, stood near the Practice School, facing Robeson Street, and contained sixty-four rooms. Veterans lodging there found their quarters less than luxurious; apparently, heating was a major problem. A writer in *The Bulldog* stated that the severity of winter could be predicted by "the supply of anti-freeze" found in the rooms. Also, Gene Brock was reported to have kept a popsicle on his desk for three days without its melting although Brock "lived on the side of the dorm with the southern exposure."<sup>31</sup>

Dining facilities at Petty-Manker were rearranged in 1946 to provide greater seating capacity and to allow food to be served cafeteria style. This modification proved inadequate, and another prefabricated government building was brought to the campus in 1947 as a dining hall, seating 250 and replacing the dining facilities at Petty-Manker. This building stood behind Lawrence and Ritter on a site previously used as a tennis court. Overcrowding was relieved further through the conversion of another prefab building into classrooms and a student center.<sup>32</sup>

Additional faculty were employed to accommodate the influx of new students. During the war years, new faculty tended to have brief periods of service, but many of those coming after the war stayed for a number of years and left indelible prints on the pages of college history. Among these were: Jack Houts, Rankin Hudson, George Naff, Mary Ellen Naff, Fred Puett, E. G. Rogers, Thelma Rucker Standridge, and J. Van Coe. They were joined by Paul Riviere who came as dean in 1948, replacing M. R. Richmond. Louie Underwood was employed, in 1945, as Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, a position he held for thirty-four years, serving under five college presidents.

With a large population of male students, Wesleyan revived its football program. C. Q. Smith, a former army captain who had played for Southern Methodist University, was hired as football coach and athletic director. Smith, assisted by J. A. Brooks, set about recapturing Wesleyan's prominent place in the sports world of junior colleges. The 1946 season was a tough one as the Bulldogs' opponents were five senior and four junior colleges. Their co-captains were Charlie Burger of Englewood and Tom Pemberton of Rockwood. Pemberton was a skillful and valiant player in spite of the amputation of his wounded arm during the war. The 1946 Bulldogs, most of them veterans, were undefeated and unscored upon by a junior college; they closed the season with a spectacular win over Middle Georgia by a score of 44-0. This outstanding record resulted in an invitation to the Peach Bowl, a game on December 13 in Macon, Georgia, where they would compete for the Southeastern Junior College Championship. According to *The Bulldog*, the Peach Bowl was "the same thing to junior colleges as the Rose Bowl to larger institutions" and would "determine the champion junior college of the South."<sup>33</sup>

A large following of students, faculty, and townspeople boarded the train in Etowah for the trip to Macon. There they saw the Bulldogs defeat Georgia Military College as Bill Eggert tossed two touchdown passes, one to J. B. "Ace" Adams and the other to Charlie Burger. Marion "Bertie" Smith added two field goals to give his team the winning score of 14 to 12.<sup>34</sup>

Having led the Bulldogs to an outstanding record, Coach Smith resigned in the summer of 1949 to accept a coaching position at Georgetown College in Kentucky. Rankin Hudson, an alumnus and former football standout, was appointed as Smith's replacement. Graduating from Wesleyan in 1939, Hudson completed his education at Virginia Tech where he continued to excel on the football field. He returned to Wesleyan from Jackson High School in Jacksonville, Florida, where his team had won the state championship. Under Coach Hudson and his assistant, Bob Matthews, the Bulldogs continued their winning ways during the 1940s.

As a result of its successful athletic program, Wesleyan became a fertile recruiting ground for four-year colleges. Hooper Eblen became head coach at Tennessee Tech; Ray Graves held the same position at the University of Florida. R. N. "Rube" McCray left Wesleyan to become coach at William and Mary where he was named Coach of the Year by the Southern Athletic Conference in 1947. J. B. "Ace" Adams continued his winning football career as a student at the University of Tennessee while Russ Godwin became an outstanding fullback for the Gators of the University of Florida.<sup>35</sup>

During the postwar years, the college choir rivaled the football team in bringing acclaim to Tennessee Wesleyan. Under the direction of Jack Houts, who joined the faculty in 1946, the choir became widely known as one of the finest college choirs in the South. Houts initiated the annual spring tour which took the musical group to churches throughout the Holston Conference and even beyond to outlying states. During 1947, the choir traveled for some 2,500 miles. The group, with about sixty-five voices, sang at the 1948 Holston Annual Conference in Kingsport and joined the Athens Music Club for a presentation of Handel's *Messiah* in 1948 and again in 1949. In 1950, a presentation of Victor Herbert's *The Red Mill* marked the beginning of the tradition of a "spring show" by the choir which would become a major campus event.

A college orchestra was organized with Virginia Brasius as conductor, and Mary Ellen Naff directed the training in public school music of prospective teachers.

Membership in student organizations grew with the increase of the student body, and fraternities as well as sororities flourished. Mild hazing was permitted during initiation week, and pledges were assigned such tasks as directing downtown traffic, begging President Robb for ten dollars, and carrying an egg on a tennis racket.<sup>36</sup>

Coeds enthusiastically welcomed the GIs to campus. A student writing in the school paper expressed gratification that "once again the campus rings with the deep, husky voices of men, much to the delight of the fairer lasses." Faculty and administrators must have been uneasy about the situation, for Nancy Dooley Burn (née

Wilkins) recalls the installation of brighter lights all over the campus as an attempt to protect young women from intimate encounters with men who were somewhat older and definitely more worldly wise. She also remembers that dancing was permitted in the late forties but with the dictum that a dancing couple must keep a distance of at least twelve inches between their bodies. One jokester brought a ruler to a dance and ostentatiously moved from couple to couple measuring the distance.<sup>37</sup>

School rules had eased considerably with the passage of time but were not readily accepted by veterans returning from the battlefield. Along with his duties as chaplain, George Naff, himself a veteran, was in charge of supervising the GI dormitory. Naff saw the irony of his situation as he later recalled, "Some of those men had won medals for bravery in combat, some had flown numerous missions, most had traveled to foreign fields, and there I was trying to be sure they were in bed by midnight." Also, it would seem that some veterans did not accept enthusiastically the required chapel attendance. A 1947 issue of the school paper mentions the occurrence of "booing and bright remarks" during the assembly. The student writer advocated the discontinuance of separation of sexes in chapel seating, feeling that women mixed among the men would have a quietening influence. One wonders, of course, if this was the only reason students felt it desirable to let girls sit with boys!<sup>38</sup>

An interesting addition to the history faculty in 1948 was Mary Shadow, a 1945 T.W.C. graduate. Shadow replaced A. J. Peters who died in 1948 after heading the history department for seventeen years. Subsequently, Shadow was elected to the Tennessee Legislature as a representative of Meigs and Rhea counties. At age 23, she was the youngest legislator as well as the only woman. Other alumni working with Shadow in Nashville were Bill Haga of Rockwood and J. Carson Ridenour of Oak Ridge.

The graduating class of 1948, with 173 members, was the largest in the school's history. Sam Adkins, an alumnus on the editorial staff of the Louisville Courier was the commencement speaker. Adkins was introduced by his classmate, J. Neal Ensinger, general manager of the *Daily Post-Athenian*. These two journalists had been part of Wesleyan's debating team which won the Southeastern Intercollegiate Debate Championship in 1930.

President Robb, in June 1949, announced his plan to retire in 1950 saying to the trustees, "I have felt that you should be advised now of my desire to retire from the presidency after another year so that you might have ample time to locate a successor." News of his imminent retirement brought a flood of tributes from a wide range of educators. Among these was a letter from Ralph W. Lloyd, president of Maryville College, which stated, "You personally have built an enviable reputation as an educator and as a church college leader."<sup>39</sup>

A notable event coinciding with Robb's retirement announcement was the laying of the cornerstone of a new gymnasium. Increase in enrollment and an expanded athletic program had made inadequate the gymnasium in the basement of the auditorium building. In 1947, the trustees approved a new gymnasium at a cost not to

exceed \$175,000. Funds were to come from the Holston Conference United College Fund and from the Pfeiffer Trust Fund. Annie Pfeiffer had died the previous year, but her generosity lived on.

Land purchased for the new gym was situated north of the main campus facing the present Green Street. The architectural firm chosen was the same company which designed the Merner-Pfeiffer Library and Lawrence Hall. Plans provided for a regulation-size playing floor with spectator seating for 1,200 along with space for dressing rooms and offices. A contract awarded to F. E. Hicks Construction of Knoxville set cost at \$208,000. The amount in excess of the originally estimated \$175,000 was raised in a special campaign among alumni, friends of the college, and the conference's United College Fund.

The cornerstone-laying ceremony on June 6, 1949, was presided over by Judge R. A. Davis, chairman of the trustees' executive board. A box placed inside the cornerstone contained: a Bible, a college catalog, three issues of the *Daily Post-Athenian*, the yearbook for 1948-49, the 1949 commencement program, a copy of the freshman handbook and of the library handbook, current bulletins, information on the Holston Conference United College Movement, leaflets concerning college sports, and newspaper clippings describing recent campus events.

President Robb had earlier recommended that the gymnasium be named in honor of the late Colonel W. B. Townsend, a former trustee and major benefactor whose will included a generous bequest to the college. Trustees, however, insisted that the building be designated the "James L. Robb Gymnasium." Colonel Townsend would be memorialized in 1951 when the auditorium would be rededicated as Townsend Hall.<sup>40</sup>

Upon completion of the gymnasium, in January 1950, a dedication ceremony sponsored by the Kiwanis Club paid tribute to President Robb. An active Kiwanian, Robb had served as president of the local club and as governor of the Kentucky-Tennessee district. Dean Paul Riviere presided at the ceremony attended by a large group of students, college personnel, Athens townspeople, and representatives of the Holston Conference. Harwell Proffitt, Kiwanis Club president, presented Robb with a gold watch in appreciation of his service to college, club, and community. The principal speaker, Paul J. Walker of the trustees' executive committee, paid tribute to President and Mrs. Robb. Leading the service of dedication was the Reverend L. E. Hoppe of Chattanooga who represented the Holston Conference. Robb concluded the occasion by expressing gratitude for the spirit of cooperation exhibited by the citizens of Athens and by ministers and laypersons of the Holston Conference. He predicted continued growth and progress for the college. After the ceremony, the large assemblage witnessed the first basketball game played in the James L. Robb Gymnasium in which, unfortunately, the Bulldogs were defeated by Emory and Henry.<sup>41</sup>

Presiding at the 1950 commencement exercises was Robb's last public act as president. After the commencement address by Governor Gordon Browning, degrees were granted to 135 graduates. In the evening, the Alumni Association honored



President and Mrs. Robb at a dinner which included several expressions of appreciation and the presentation to Robb of the keys to a new car.

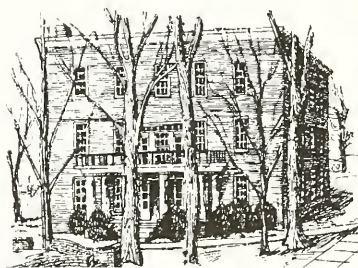
On his last day in the president's office, Robb wrote letters to contributors to a special fund for the purchase of an organ, announcing that the \$9,000 goal was attained and complimenting Kenneth Higgins and his co-workers for their leadership. "It is such interest and such cooperation," he wrote, "that has enabled Tennessee Wesleyan to make the progress it has made in the years past and will enable it to continue to make in the years ahead."<sup>42</sup>

Thus ended the longest period of administrative leadership in the college's history. Robb served the school for thirty-two years, seven as dean and twenty-five as president. He guided Tennessee Wesleyan through World War I, through the transition to a junior college after separation from the University of Chattanooga, through the hard times of the Great Depression, and through World War II and its aftermath. His ability as a fundraiser brought a number of large contributions including those of Annie Pfeiffer which ultimately totaled approximately a half-million dollars. Under his leadership, the school was nationally recognized as one of the finest junior colleges in the South, accredited since 1926 by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The trustees granted him the title of Professor Emeritus, the first president to be so recognized and the first to continue in office until his retirement. James L. Robb met exceptional challenges with exceptional leadership.



## CHAPTER 9

### EXPANSION AND CELEBRATION: 1950-1959



“Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,  
And looks to that alone,  
Laughs at impossibilities  
And cries, “It shall be done!”

- Charles Wesley

The decade of the fifties, for the nation as a whole, brings to mind the Korean War, the new popularity of television, McCarthyism, Brown vs. Board of Education, and “I like Ike.” The small college in Athens was affected by these influences but added two special milestones of its own: the return to senior college status and the celebration of one hundred years of trials and triumphs.

The person most responsible for the college’s transition from junior to senior college was its new president, LeRoy A. Martin. Since President Robb had announced his impending retirement a year in advance, the trustees were able to conduct a year-long search for an appropriate replacement. In their choice of Martin they found a person who combined a sound academic background and broad experience with a special knowledge of Athens and its college. Since Martin had spent his boyhood in Athens and had attended the Athens School of the University of Chattanooga, his appointment was, in a sense, a homecoming.

At the time of his selection, LeRoy Martin was serving as superintendent of the Paterson District of the Newark (New Jersey) Conference, one of the largest districts of the Methodist Church. He was born in Morristown, Tennessee, but spent most of his childhood in the parsonage of Trinity Methodist Church where his father was the minister. It was during the pastorate of the Reverend Burton Martin that the present church building was constructed. LeRoy Martin received a diploma from the Athens School and graduated from the University of Chattanooga in 1924. Following his ordination as a minister and his completion of advanced degrees from Boston University School of Theology and from Drew University, he served the Methodist Church in several appointments. In 1946, the University of Chattanooga recognized his leadership by awarding him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. His name appeared in *Who’s Who in Religious Leaders of America* and *Who’s Who in America*.<sup>1</sup>

President Martin, known to his many friends as "Cordy," arrived in Athens on July 6, 1950, after a two-day drive from New Jersey "in the rain and with a dead radio." In the president's office he met his predecessor, Dr. Robb, who pointed out that he also had arrived on campus on July 6, thirty-two years earlier. Perhaps this coincidence can be viewed as a good omen.<sup>2</sup>

President Martin immediately proved himself a tireless worker, "near kin to a whirlwind," according to one observer. During the summer of 1950, he attended conferences at the University of North Carolina and at the Institute of Higher Education in Nashville, held numerous meetings on campus, found time to become acquainted with summer students, and moved his family from New Jersey to the president's residence, Blakeslee Hall.<sup>3</sup>

When Martin took office, the enrollment flush of the postwar years was virtually over. Enrollment peaked at 549 in 1947-48, declined to 321 in the fall of 1950, and by 1952 had fallen to 220. Contributing to the drop in enrollment was the Korean War which began a few days prior to Martin's arrival on campus. The new president immediately faced the problem of declining enrollment accompanied by the ever-present scarcity of financial resources.

President Martin was convinced that the college needed to obtain more support from the local community. Before undertaking a major financial campaign, he sought to strengthen a cooperative spirit between town and gown and to emphasize the benefits offered by the college to townspeople. He conferred with members of the community as to how Tennessee Wesleyan could better serve Athens citizens. Acting on recommendations received, he announced that the facilities of the library, including the privilege of borrowing books, were available free of charge and that college buildings could be used for public meetings without cost. The college also would offer business seminars, concerts, and plays with no admission charge. An expanded evening program with classes for working adults began in the fall of 1954 and was highly successful.

A major factor in building a stronger tie between college and community was Martin's creation of an advisory council, the Tennessee Wesleyan Advisory Board, composed of business and professional leaders who offered invaluable advice and support. This group ultimately would play a major role in solving the financial problems accompanying the college's transition to senior college status.

Citizens of the area were made more aware of the college's resources through a weekly radio program aired on local station WLAR. Directed by Joan T. Walker of the drama department with William McGill of the English department as master of ceremonies, the thirty-minute program offered its listeners short talks by faculty and administrators on a variety of topics and music furnished by students and faculty of the music department.<sup>4</sup>

Early in his presidency, Martin became convinced that Tennessee Wesleyan should again become a four-year college. More students, he believed, now sought a four-year degree and preferred to enroll in a senior college for their full residency

rather than transferring from a junior college. An even more compelling argument came when the Tennessee Board of Education ruled to change the requirement for permanent teacher certification from two years of college work to four. Wesleyan's teacher training program had long been its most successful component and necessary to its survival.<sup>5</sup>

Martin was strengthened in his conviction by a letter from James A. Fowler of Knoxville, distinguished alumnus of the class of 1884 and former chairman of the board of trustees who continued to serve as an honorary trustee. Fowler wrote: "Tennessee Wesleyan College occupies an unfavorable position with reference to increasing its student body. It is strictly a junior college, and, therefore, its curriculum is limited to the freshman and sophomore college years. As long as that condition exists it will be difficult to procure an attendance sufficient to maintain the school. I have given the matter considerable thought and have talked it over with a gentleman who, I think, has more experience with all grades of educational work than any other person in the State. My judgment is that the curriculum should be extended to a full four-year college course, and the sooner it is done the better the result for the school."<sup>6</sup>

Reporting to the trustees in May 1952, Martin gave a detailed argument for the return to senior college status. He quoted statistics to show the lack of growth in church-related junior colleges, especially those in the South. Statistics also indicated that financial support by foundations, government agencies, and individuals was more readily given to senior colleges. The new requirement for teacher certification was noted along with the explanation that the college had been approved by the Tennessee Board of Education to offer a third year of teacher training with the stipulation that the school move quickly toward a four-year program leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Education.

Martin also informed the trustees of increased requirements for entry into professional schools of medicine and law. The University of Tennessee Medical School had increased its entry requirement to three rather than two years of pre-medical training. Moreover, as of September 1952, all reputable law schools would admit only students with three years of pre-law. Wesleyan had successful two-year programs in both pre-medicine and pre-law which the new requirements would eliminate.

Loss of the vital teacher-training and pre-professional programs, Martin emphasized, would threaten the college's existence. Between 1929 and 1950, more than 1,300 teachers earned certification at Tennessee Wesleyan. Of the 273 public school teachers working in McMinn County in 1952, 168 had been trained at T.W.C. Also, of the several students completing the pre-medicine program, none had been rejected by a medical school, and none had made failing grades. In fact, four T.W.C. graduates had received the Doctor of Medicine degree at the University of Tennessee's 1952 commencement.

Martin emphasized that the time was right for a change, not only because of the problems mentioned but also because of McMinn County's industrial growth. A strong indication of the area's increasing prosperity was the recent announcement

of the plan for a multi-million dollar plant to be built by Bowater Paper Corporation at Calhoun. "As the county moves forward," said Martin, "so should the college it serves."

Following Martin's detailed report, the trustees formally approved the third year of teacher training. They took no action on the movement to a four-year program but authorized further study of the proposal.<sup>7</sup>

During the following months, the administration and faculty worked tirelessly to complete a study that would address the need for expansion and changes necessary to meet requirements for a senior college as set forth by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. In October 1952, Martin reported study results to the trustees' executive committee. Following his report, the committee voted unanimously to recommend to the full board that the college move to a four-year program.<sup>8</sup>

The executive committee presented its recommendation at the board's November meeting, but board members still had questions. Feeling hesitant to endorse the plan without specific information concerning costs, the trustees appointed a study committee to compile data on what the necessary changes would cost; they insisted on talking dollars and cents. In response to this directive, the study committee enlisted the assistance of a financial consultant of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and arrived at an estimate of funds required for the first four years of operation as a senior college. The figure of \$108,900 was reported to the trustees at their meeting in May 1953, with the explanation that this amount would be in addition to the usual support expected from the church and from donors.<sup>9</sup>

The financial report of the study committee resulted in further delay. The Holston Conference recently had launched a long-range campaign for support of its three colleges, but no part of the funds raised by the College Development Program could be used to change Tennessee Wesleyan's status as a junior college. The trustees feared that another fundraising campaign on behalf of Wesleyan alone might hamper the success of the conference campaign. They voted to delay further any recommendation of a four-year program.

The plan for a senior college seemed likely to flounder for years as it was discussed by various committees and subcommittees. It was the citizens of Athens who came to the rescue. The Tennessee Wesleyan Advisory Board, led by Chairman Harry L. Hawkins, not only agreed to underwrite the required \$108,900 but also pledged continued support even beyond the program's first four years. Without this courageous move by the citizenry of Athens, the realization of a senior college would have taken years to accomplish and, indeed, might never have materialized.<sup>10</sup>

Not only did members of the advisory council offer support, but the ensuing fundraising drive became an expression of confidence by many residents of the area. Donations received were not limited to alumni, Methodists, the financially fortunate, or any other segment of the population. It became common talk among workers and contributors that Tennessee Wesleyan was "our college."



When President Martin was informed by Harry Hawkins, in February 1954, that the financial goal had been attained. Martin commented, "The goal has been reached, and we stand at the top of a hill which was a hard one to climb." In an editorial in the local newspaper, J. Neal Ensminger wrote: "With the goal in hand, now people of the area can say to the Holston Conference of the Methodist Church, 'We have done our part; now you do yours.'"11

When the college's trustees met two months later, the vote of approval came quickly. Three weeks later their decision was reported to the Holston Conference in presentations made by President Martin; F. B. Shelton, chairman of the board of trustees; and J. Neal Ensminger, editor of the *Daily Post-Athenian*. Ensminger's forceful five-minute address was particularly persuasive and left no doubt of community support of the plan. When Bishop Short asked if there were further discussion, none arose, and delegates quickly and unanimously voted in favor of the plan. As President Martin left the platform, the entire conference of some one thousand delegates gave him an unexpected and enthusiastic standing ovation. The Holston Conference now had done its part. As a writer in an alumni publication reported, "On a cloudy, rainy day in Bristol, a new, brighter day dawned for Tennessee Wesleyan College."12

With approval from the trustees and from the conference combined with exceptional community support, the plan for a senior college must now change from a future goal to a present reality. This meant employing additional faculty, revamping the curriculum, expanding library holdings, and both renovating existing buildings and building new ones. President Martin was determined to make the institution as notable as a senior college as it had been as a junior college under the leadership of President Robb.

A key element in success was the attraction and retention of well-qualified faculty, a difficult task considering the college's low salary scale. In an expression of dissatisfaction, Martin noted that when he served as district superintendent in Newark, his twenty-three-year-old secretary "received more salary than fifty percent of the professors on our faculty." He worked diligently and with some success to bring faculty salaries to a competitive level which enabled him to make several valuable additions to the faculty.<sup>13</sup>

Dr. F. Heisse Johnson was chosen to supervise the academic program. Holding the Bachelor of Arts from Brothers College and both the Bachelor of Divinity and Doctor of Philosophy from Drew University, Dr. Johnson had joined the faculty in 1953 as C.O. Jones Professor of Religion. When the college adopted the senior college program, Dr. Johnson was appointed academic dean. Dean Paul Riviere became dean of admissions and registrar, replacing C. O. Douglass. J. Van B. Coe served as dean of students and Elizabeth Brubaker as dean of women.

Additions to the faculty during Martin's tenure included: Frances J. Biddle, physical education; Albert Bowman, history; Enid Bryan, English and classics; Harry Coble, speech and drama; Frances Graves, art; Mary Greenhoe, music; Carl B. Honaker, chemistry and physics; B. T. Hutson, business administration; Richard M. Johnson,



biology; William McGill, English; Reva Puett, home economics; Fred Puett, business administration; E. G. Rogers, English; M. Clifton ("Tip") Smith, education and basketball coach; and Alf Walle, education. These joined such seasoned worthies as: J. Van Coe, economics and sociology; Martha Hale, art; Jack Houts, music; Rankin Hudson, physical education and football coach; Claryse Myers, librarian; George Naff, religion; and G. A. Yates, mathematics. Longtime educators James W. Baldwin, C. O. Douglass, and Arthur Myers retired during the Martin administration.

Martin also reached into the community to bring in part-time instructors including: Marvin Cunningham, John L. Foster, James C. Guffey, Dr. William Joubert, Harold Powers, Dr. Helen Richards, Eugene Sadler, and Bernard Zellner. Most of these taught in the evening college which, after its beginning in 1954, rapidly grew in success.

Notable additions to the staff were Mary Nelle Jackson, administrative secretary, and Robbie J. Ensminger, secretary to the president. Jackson continued in her position for twenty-five years, serving ably and graciously. Ensminger, first working in the president's office as a student assistant, eventually became administrative secretary and director of alumni affairs in a career that spanned almost five decades.

Not content with merely hiring competent faculty members, President Martin was a firm believer in faculty development, constantly urging teachers to expand their knowledge and to improve teaching techniques. After acquiring a list of reputable professional organizations, he encouraged membership in one or more of these groups by each faculty member and asked to be informed of such membership. He also asked the librarian for a report of the number of books borrowed from the library by each faculty member during an academic quarter. The general faculty reaction to such supervision of reading habits is not known, but one suspects it to have been other than totally enthusiastic.<sup>14</sup>

The curriculum was adapted to the new four-year program, which required the completion of 192 quarter-hours leading to the degree of either Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science. Each student chose a major from the fields of English, biology, chemistry, social science, history and government, religion, education, business administration, or economics. A minor could be chosen from any of the above fields or from music, mathematics, physical education, or speech and drama. In the early fifties, a two-year program remained available by which a student might choose to complete 100 quarter-hours in general culture or to train as a medical secretary or in secretarial science. The two-year program, leading to an Associate of Arts degree, was discontinued in 1958 when it had only seven graduates.

Growth in enrollment resulting from the movement to a four-year program exceeded expectations, reaching 305 in 1954-55, the first school year under the new system. The following year saw a thirty-six percent increase, the second largest growth exhibited by any Methodist college in the nation. By 1957-58, enrollment included 500 full-time and 200 part-time students. Such a dramatic increase placed a severe strain on facilities and led the trustees to the unprecedented action of limiting enroll-

ment. In October 1958, the board voted to restrict enrollment to 650 FTE (full-time equated) in order "to maintain quality programs and remain within the economic pattern of the conference."<sup>15</sup>

Growing enrollment brought the need for expansion and improvement of facilities. Martin's presidency saw an extensive program of renovation with almost \$100,000 spent on improvements to Petty-Manker Hall. Included in the remodeled Petty-Manker were a television lounge and an infirmary. Banfield Hall received new lighting and additional equipment for the science department.

The dining facilities in Ritter Hall were enlarged by the removal of the large porches on the east side and inclusion of this area in the dining room. The dining hall at Ritter now served the entire campus and accommodated 300 diners. The enlarged dining area was named Black Dining Hall in honor of Mrs. H. C. Black, who served for several years as a college trustee. Ritter was given an additional facelift by gray shingles applied to the exterior and by the removal of the long-familiar picket fence. One wing of the building was remodeled and equipped for use by the home economics department. These changes in Ritter came after 1952 when the Woman's Division of Christian Service of the Methodist Church relinquished to the college ownership and administration of the dormitory.<sup>16</sup>

Also receiving extensive renovation was the auditorium-gymnasium, which was rededicated in 1951 and named in honor of Colonel W. B. Townsend, a dedicated trustee and generous benefactor. According to Louie Underwood, superintendent of buildings and grounds, President Martin exhibited a special talent for visualizing how every available space could be used beneficially. The gym on Townsend Hall's lower level became superfluous by the building of the Robb Gymnasium and was used only occasionally for parties or for elementary school basketball games. Renovation of the old gym resulted in new offices for the president and administrative secretary, a mimeographing room, a small auditorium with stage, a post office, a bookstore, and a student center with snack bar. The small auditorium was intended for use by community groups and for meetings and performances not requiring a large space. The larger auditorium overhead, seating 800, received an improved lighting system, new stage curtains, and repainting. The exterior of Townsend Hall was enhanced by the addition of white columns to the front portico.<sup>17</sup>

General growth plus returning Korean War veterans increased male enrollment beyond any previous level and necessitated more housing for men. In 1954, the college purchased a building, formerly a motel, on the corner of Guille Street and Lynn Avenue. Used as apartments for married students, this building was named Fowler Hall in honor of General James Fowler, an 1884 graduate and longtime supporter. Two former residences acquired and named Wright Hall and Bolton Hall furnished additional dormitory space for men.

Even with the above additions, the college needed more and better housing for male students. Ground was cleared in 1956 for a brick dormitory to be located at the corner of Green and Robeson Streets. Construction of this \$300,000 building, which

would provide quarters for more than one hundred students, began in the summer of 1957. To clear the way for the new structure, the old Observation and Practice School was moved a short distance to the rear of its former location. The school building had served for thirty-one years as a laboratory for the training of elementary teachers, but its use was discontinued in 1953 when education students began to do their practice teaching in the public schools of the city and county.

Extensive renovation made the campus of the fifties quite different from its condition in earlier days. Lucy Hornsby Fowler, who lived near the college as a child, shared memories with President Martin in a letter of 1956: "Well do I remember when my father, a trustee who kept the scanty college funds in a large iron safe in his store, used to distribute them among the members of the faculty. And living so near the campus, on my father's orders we as children used to run the pigs off the campus and stop up holes in the fence."<sup>18</sup>

President Martin and his colleagues felt the pressing need for yet another building, a fine arts center. Most of the music classes and choir rehearsals were held in a wooden prefab building called Moffitt Hall. Classes in art, speech, and drama occurred in scattered and inadequate settings. Late in 1955, the dream of a structure used for promotion of the fine arts came closer to realization when Tom Sherman, Athens businessman and honorary trustee, presented to the college a check for the purchase of property on the corner of North Jackson and College Streets. It was Sherman's desire that this site, location of a home built by Professor David Bolton in 1898, be used for the construction of a fine arts center to be called the Laura T. Sherman Fine Arts Building. According to Martin, Sherman's gift was "the largest contribution which a citizen of Athens had ever made to the college." Although plans were drawn for the building, additional funds were needed, and construction did not occur until the early years of the next decade.<sup>19</sup>

Part of the impetus for providing a fine arts center came from the growing strength of the music program which was particularly evidenced by the success of the college choir. The choir's director, Jack Houts, came to Wesleyan in 1946 and began an exceptional choral group, which was in increasing demand by churches wanting special programs of sacred music. By 1950, the choir was busy almost every weekend from February through May as it appeared in churches from West Virginia to Florida. An indication of its reputation came when the choir received an invitation to sing before the General Conference of the Methodist Church, meeting in Minneapolis in 1956. This august group consisted of church delegates from every state and from forty foreign countries, and it was a singular honor to appear before them.<sup>20</sup>

Sending thirty-five singers to Minneapolis required funds beyond the college's budget. An appeal to Holston Conference churches resulted in support from forty-eight congregations. Additional donations came from 113 alumni, the largest number answering a financial appeal in the past six years. Several Athens businesses also contributed, and the college trustees raised almost half of the necessary funding.<sup>21</sup>

Seventeen choirs performed at the General Conference, but only the group from Tennessee Wesleyan received a ten-minute ovation. One delegate, Dr. Bachman G. Hodge, pastor of Chattanooga's Centenary Methodist Church, remarked to Martin, "You could not have bought this publicity for Wesleyan for \$50,000." In Martin's introduction of the choir to assembled delegates, he dedicated the program of music to the memory of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Pfeiffer whose generosity had enriched immeasurably the facilities and resources of the college.<sup>22</sup>

The trip to Minneapolis gave the young choir members a taste of big-city life. Regenia Lawson Mayfield remembers the excitement of attending a burlesque show. Most students were not old enough to buy tickets legally, but one choir member, who was of the required age, purchased tickets for a group of his buddies and treated them to a novel experience.<sup>23</sup>

In cooperation with the drama department, Jack Houts initiated the custom of a musical production each spring, beginning with *The Red Mill* in 1950. Other performances of the fifties included: *The Desert Song*, *Rose Marie*, *Naughty Marietta*, *The Vagabond King*, *Oklahoma*, *The Three Musketeers*, and *Annie, Get Your Gun*, as well as *The Legend of Nocatula* which was a part of the college's centennial celebration.

College officials continued to take seriously their duty to protect their charges from demoralizing influences, but rules had eased considerably by 1959. Use of intoxicants and "gambling in any form" were still forbidden, either on or off campus. All students were required to live in college residences unless living with relatives. Women's residence halls closed at 9:30 p.m. except on weekends when the closing hour was extended to 11:00 p.m. Women were required to sign out when leaving the campus, to sign in on their return, and to be in their dorms at the closing hour except by special permission. A female student could not spend the night off campus unless she had written authorization from her parents, her hostess, and the college registrar. Head residents, Reba Parsons at Ritter and Ida Ruth Lewis at Lawrence, diligently enforced these rules.

Men had greater freedom but were required to obtain permission before going out of town. They were even allowed to visit the parlors of women's residence halls after the evening meal until 7:30 on weekdays and until the closing hour on weekends. In the fifties, a citywide curfew of 11:00 p.m. was enforced by the city of Athens.

The era of blue jeans and sweatshirts had not yet arrived at T.W.C., for the student handbook stated, "Street clothes are required for classes, the dining hall, the library, in administrative offices, and in the Student Center after dinner and on Sunday."<sup>24</sup>

Greek letter organizations dominated student social life and were regulated by a Panhellenic Council composed of the presidents and faculty sponsors of the fraternities and sororities. Fraternities were Phi Sigma Nu and Eta Iota Tau; sororities were Eta Upsilon Gamma, Kappa Delta Phi, Sigma Iota Chi and Zeta Mu Epsilon. Membership came through preferential bidding, but to avoid the type of snobbish cruelty found on some campuses, the college ruled that "every student who goes through rushing and desires to pledge will be given a chance to do so."<sup>25</sup>



Sororities and fraternities sponsored dances in the gymnasium and banquets at the Robert E. Lee Hotel as well as other social affairs such as hayrides, wiener roasts, and excursions to drive-in movies. Keen rivalry existed among the groups with each striving to be able to boast of its membership including such honored positions as football captain, football queen, Student Council president, King or Queen of Hearts (elected annually on Valentine's Day) or recipients of academic awards. The Greek organizations also competed in intramural sports. In order to participate in intramural activities, students choosing not to belong to a sorority or fraternity formed a group known as the Independents.

Other student organizations of this era included a chapter of the Tennessee Poetry Society, the Art Club, the Laura T. Sherman Music Fraternity, Future Business Leaders of America, and a discussion group called the Wesleyan Round Table. Since the college now attracted a growing number of foreign students, an International Club was formed in which students from the United States joined with those from other countries to promote understanding of diverse cultures. One of the strongest organizations was the Veterans' Club which had a membership of more than one hundred and engaged in service activities on campus and in the community.

Religious organizations remained strong. The Student Christian Association, Wesleyan Fellowship, and Life Service Volunteers offered effective programs of study and worship. Chapel attendance remained a requirement for all students but was no longer a daily activity. Two sessions per week consisted of a religious service on Wednesday and assembly on Friday. A student organization usually presented the Friday assembly program. Church attendance on Sunday now was "encouraged" rather than required as in earlier years.<sup>26</sup>

Perhaps the individual remembered most fondly by students was Burkett Witt who presided over the eatery known as the "slop shop." Witt first set up his establishment in a building near the campus on North Jackson Street but moved to the student center in Townsend after that building's renovation. To students he became not only the purveyor of food and soft drinks but a friend and counselor. Those in need of ready cash could depend on Burkett for a small loan, and it is reported that he never failed to be repaid. Treating students with respect, understanding, and kindness, he was rewarded by their respect and affection.<sup>27</sup>

When the college became a four-year institution, students became eligible for election to *Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities*. The first group to receive this honor, in 1956, were: Bill Akins, Patricia DeLozier, Richard Gilbert, Billie Dean Haley, Dolores Mynatt, Barbara Pickel, Charles Seepe, and Paul Starnes.

Also growing out of the four-year program was the custom of freshman initiation directed by the Student Council. Before the fall of 1954, there was no freshman class, for the junior college designated its classes as juniors and seniors. In the new freshman orientation program, students older than twenty and all veterans were excused from participation. Other freshmen were required to wear blue and gold



beanies, display a cardboard sign on their backs with name and home town, address upperclassmen as "sir" or "ma'am," and "render reasonable personal service" to upperclassmen. They were to be able to sing the "Alma Mater" and the "Fight Song" by the end of their third day on campus, were forbidden to walk on grass at any time, and were required to stay on campus until the end of the two-week initiation period. Those failing to comply were tried in "rat court" and appropriately penalized.<sup>28</sup>

Sports continued to be an important element of student life. Football, coached by Rankin Hudson, remained the major sport in the early fifties. In 1952, the Bulldogs fought their way to the co-championship of the Southeastern Junior College Conference with a 5-2 record. Hudson also coached men's basketball which made a somewhat less impressive showing. Women's basketball flourished briefly but ended soon after the school became a senior college. The Lady Bulldogs, coached by Jean Biddle, racked up thirteen wins against four losses in 1956, their last season of the decade. The 1956 team consisted of: Captain Peggy Shell, Alternate Captain Lois Ann Lance, and players Barbara Akers, Gerry Camp, Joanne Clayton, Grace Coates, Nancy French, Viola Huskey, Kathryn Justis, Bobbie Jean Martin, Ann Owens, Barbara Pickel, Martha Walker, Jo Williams and Phyllis Williams.

A powerful tennis team, coached by J. Van Coe, won the Southeastern Junior College Conference championship in both 1952 and 1953. The accomplished players were Morris Beecroft, Joe Harris, Eugene McHaffey, John McKenzie, Billy Watts, and Pete Wilson. Businessman Jones Beene assisted in training the tennis team.

Baseball returned to the Wesleyan campus in 1955 after an absence of more than twenty years. During the 1955 season, the fledgling team, coached by George Wilson, achieved a 9-9 record.

The Bulldogs made their football debut as a senior college team in 1956, with Coach Hudson being assisted by Junius Graves and LeRoy Anderson. Co-captains Claude Catron and Hugh Reynolds led the team to a 5-3 record, a remarkable achievement for a squad which had only fifteen days of practice before the season's opening. However, serious problems came to the popular sport with the college's senior status. As newcomers, the team now must face schools with more established programs and with sufficient financial resources to offer attractive scholarships. Moreover, the college, lacking a football field and a band of its own, depended on the McMinn High School field and the high school's band. Realizing the magnitude of these problems, Coach Hudson announced his resignation in the summer of 1957, planning to enter private business. During his nine-year tenure, Hudson compiled a 54-18-4 record, trained several outstanding athletes, and was an excellent role model for students.

With the departure of Hudson and with the 1957 fall season approaching, the football squad faced a difficult situation. The season was salvaged by LeRoy Anderson and Junius Graves, Athens businessmen who had worked as part-time assistants to Hudson. They stepped in to prepare the 1957 Bulldogs for a 4-4 record, a notable achievement in view of the circumstances. This was the last football season for the college until the 1980s.

Aware that building a competitive football program would require considerable funding, President Martin preferred to use the college's limited resources to build a strong academic program. He authorized a study of the situation to be conducted by representatives of the trustees, advisory board, and faculty. Results of the study convinced the trustees, meeting in February 1958, to vote for elimination of the football program, effective immediately. The board's action included the recommendation to strengthen participation in less expensive intercollegiate sports such as basketball, baseball, tennis, and, perhaps, golf.<sup>29</sup>

Students reacted quite negatively to this decision. They had enjoyed cheering their gridiron heroes, electing a football queen, and competing for the prize-winning float in the fall football parade. In March of 1958, more than one hundred students gathered to hang and burn an effigy of President Martin. They then moved to the library where the faculty was meeting and raised the vigorous cry of "We want football!" Some disappointed alumni threatened to withdraw their financial support. Nevertheless, the decision remained firm, and the college suffered no serious loss of finances or of enrollment as a result.<sup>30</sup>

Men's basketball now became the leading athletic program. M. C. ("Tip") Smith joined the staff in 1955 after achieving an outstanding coaching record at Tennessee Military Institute, Charleston High School and Bradley County High School. Under his leadership, the basketball squad scored seventeen victories with only five defeats in 1955. Performing on the court were Eddie Cartwright, Joe Crabtree, Sammy Craig, Dwain Farmer, Doyle Fowler, Pat Gorman, Ronnie Knight, Dick Mendenhall, Junior Prewitt, Hugh Reynolds, Jimmy Shelby, and Boyd Woody.

After a successful three-year coaching career, "Tip" Smith was named Athletic Director and devoted most of his time to teaching. His replacement as basketball coach was William Boyd ("Buddy") Cate, a native of Cleveland who had been an outstanding player at Western Kentucky State College.

In 1957, Tennessee Wesleyan celebrated one hundred years as a Methodist College. It seemed appropriate that the centennial coincided with the first occasion since 1906 on which graduates received four-year bachelor degrees.

During commencement week, aptly called Centennial Week, a number of distinguished representatives of the church and of higher education visited the campus to participate in celebratory activities. President Martin's recently published book went on sale at this time. *A History of Tennessee Wesleyan College: 1857-1957* was the first book-length account of the institution's rich history.

A favorite campus legend was revived. The oak and hackberry trees which, according to folklore, marked the burial site of the Cherokee maiden and her lover, had died and been removed in 1952. In the spring of 1957, the Athens Senior Girl Scouts planted an oak and a hackberry sapling on the lawn of Ritter Hall shortly before the opening of the musical drama *The Legend of Nocatula*.

The musical dramatization of the romantic tale of Nocatula played to overflow audiences on Thursday and Friday evenings during Centennial Week. The entire

drama was the work of faculty members with script by Harry Coble, music by Mary Greenhoe and Jack Houts and lyrics by Charlotte Houts. Nancy Harrison starred as Nocatula and Charles Seepe as her lover, Conestoga.

Program notes summarized the romantic story and asked "What has the legend to do with Tennessee Wesleyan College?" The answer was found in the words of Nocatula's father, Chief Atta-Kulla-Kulla, played by James Bowers. As the chief performed the burial rites, placing an acorn in the hand of the slain Conestoga and a hackberry seed in the hand of Nocatula, he said: "We will build a mound and consecrate these grounds to the young, the vital—those that would build new worlds... Here ended a world, but here begins one, too."<sup>31</sup>

Commencement Day, the culmination of Centennial Week, saw the awarding of degrees to eighty-five graduates. At the close of the summer session, twenty additional graduates joined the class of 1957, the first to receive four-year degrees in fifty-one years of the institution's history and the first ever to receive a bachelor's degree from a school named Tennessee Wesleyan College.

James L. Robb, recognized as building a firm foundation for the college's progress, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Pedagogy at the 1957 commencement. Also receiving honorary degrees were Bishop Roy Short, Muriel Dane, Myron F. Wicke, and the Reverends Mark Moore, Clyde F. Watkins, and Joseph H. Harding. Also being given special recognition were Tom Sherman and G. F. Lockmiller, generous donors, and Mrs. Morgan Watkins, an honor graduate of the class of 1906.

Shortly after the commencement exercises, a ground-breaking ceremony was held for the new men's dormitory to be named Centennial Hall. Plans for this \$300,000 structure began in 1956, and President Martin had hoped, unsuccessfully, to interest an affluent donor in financing the dormitory; instead, funds came primarily from a loan, amortized over forty years, from the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency. Centennial Hall opened in the fall of 1958.

The centennial activities brought praise from several sources. After attending commencement exercises at another college, Dr. Myron Wicke wrote to Martin: "I could not avoid comparison. There was a polish to your program which the other could not match at all." The size of the 105-member graduating class of 1957 particularly pleased Martin who reported that when promoting his vision for a senior college, several skeptics had predicted that in the unlikely event of the program materializing, no more than twenty-five members could be expected in the first graduating class.<sup>32</sup>

In spite of initial success, Martin told the faculty, much remained to be done. A major challenge was the achieving of accreditation from appropriate agencies. In March 1957, the Tennessee Department of Education had approved the four-year program for teacher training. Because of a change in accreditation rules, approval from the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools did not come until the winter of 1958. The University Senate of the Methodist Church gave its authorization in the summer of 1959.

Realizing that an effective college comes only through effective teachers, Martin set as a major goal the improvement of faculty salaries. At the beginning of the 1957-1958 term, he reminded the faculty that salaries had increased by 86 percent during his administration. The salary scale for 1957-58 ranged from \$6,000 for a full professor to \$3,400 for an instructor. Admitting that compensation was still inadequate, Martin assured faculty members that their salaries now were, "as good as some of the state colleges and far in advance of several church-related ones."<sup>33</sup>

An able administrator left the college in the summer of 1957 when Dr. F. Heisse Johnson was appointed Director of Higher Education of the Holston Conference. As academic dean, Johnson had directed the academic program and had shouldered much of the responsibility as the college worked toward senior status. His renown as a Biblical scholar had been exhibited not only in chapel services and in the classroom but in nationwide church services and conferences. On several occasions he represented the Methodist Church on national radio. Even more memorable to students was his devotion to the cause of needy students who were grateful for his personal generosity and for his securing employment for them in jobs both on the campus and in the community. Students often were invited to the Johnson home where Lydia Johnson presided as a warm and gracious hostess. Although his new position moved his office to Johnson City, Dr. Johnson remained closely connected with the Athens college and continued to promote its welfare.<sup>34</sup>

Dr. Alf Walle served as acting dean until the appointment of Dr. Robert C. Mildram in the spring of 1959. The new academic dean had impressive credentials with a Ph.B. from the University of Vermont, a B.S. from Andrew Newton Theological University, and both an M.A. and a Ph.D. from Yale.

Just one month before Dean Mildram's arrival, President Martin had announced his resignation and his acceptance of the presidency of the University of Chattanooga. As a graduate of both the Athens School and of the University of Chattanooga, Martin felt closely tied to both institutions. He had been concerned about the animosity still existing in Athens toward the university that some viewed as having taken away the Athens institution's position in the academic world as a respected senior college. After more than fifty years, resentment had not died completely.

Early in his presidency, Martin invited the Chattanooga university's academic dean, Maxwell A. Smith, to speak at a faculty dinner. He also filled two faculty vacancies with University of Chattanooga instructors. Concerning these appointments and his own visit, Smith wrote to Martin, "I believe you will find them (the instructors) helpful in your efforts to bring about closer relations between the two colleges. I hope my visit may have contributed a little toward this end."<sup>35</sup>

President Martin presided over his final Wesleyan commencement in the spring of 1959, presenting degrees to ninety-seven graduates and awarding two honorary degrees. Gilbert E. Govan, historian and University of Chattanooga librarian, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature. Russell Kramer, chairman of the college's board of trustees was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Law.



Then came an unannounced move as Kramer took over as presiding official and conferred upon a surprised LeRoy Martin the honorary Doctor of Law degree. This tribute recognized the outstanding progress made by the college during the Martin years, progress which one Methodist educator described as “incredible.”<sup>36</sup>

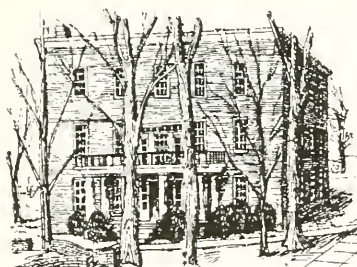
In the summer of 1959, the Reverend Ralph Wilson Mohny became the new president and continued to move the college forward.

A fitting conclusion to the account of the college during the Martin years comes from an address made by Martin himself on the occasion of the centennial celebration:

One hundred years of struggle—poverty, debts, depressions, wars—all these facts made their impact, yet presidents held on, convinced that days of greater service would dawn—and now as a second century begins, it can be said that 1957 could be the dawn of a nobler and more creative day.<sup>37</sup>

## CHAPTER 10

### ONWARD AND UPWARD: 1959-1965



**"When He first the work begun  
Small and feeble was His day;  
Now the word doth swiftly run  
Now it wins its widening way."**

*- Charles Wesley*

President Ralph Wilson Mohney was a worthy successor of LeRoy Martin and shared Martin's vision of Tennessee Wesleyan as a small, church-related, liberal arts college of distinction. He committed his presidency to the fulfillment of that goal.

At the time of his appointment, the Reverend Mohney was serving as superintendent of the Kingsport District of the Holston Conference. His educational background included a B.A. degree from Transylvania College, a B.D. from Vanderbilt University, and the M.S.T. from Boston University. He had completed additional graduate training at Garrett Biblical Institute and had been awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by Emory and Henry College.

Accompanying President Mohney to the Wesleyan campus were his charming wife, the former Marie Nell Webb, and two young sons. Like her husband, Nell Mohney was recognized as an outstanding speaker and a strong church leader.

President Mohney was inaugurated on October 3, 1959, with Bishop Roy Short presiding. Speaking before the large audience witnessing the ceremony, the new president stated that he was humbled by the responsibility he had assumed and described his view of the college as "a lighthouse with its foundation of brick and stone running deep and its beacon providing light for life's voyage." The college had an important mission, he believed, for "education can become the solution to many of the world's complex problems, and faith is vital to the process of a college fulfilling its obligation to society."<sup>1</sup>

Challenges facing the new president included the need for additional facilities to serve a growing student body, frequent changes in faculty, the addition of faculty and staff positions, and the need to increase endowment.

During Mohney's tenure, enrollment grew from 554 full-time students in 1959 to 745 in 1965. Such an increase, in part, reflects a national trend but must also be at-

tributed to the president's foresight in appointing the college's first full-time director of admissions. Previously, student recruitment had been the task of faculty members and administrators who had limited time for such an effort. The president turned to Charles J. ("Buddy") Liner, an alumnus and physical education instructor, appointing him admissions director and making him responsible for recruitment. Liner tackled his assignment with enthusiasm, laying plans to carry the Wesleyan story to high schools in Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and Kentucky. By spring, he had visited ninety high schools and arranged for frequent visits to the campus by high school groups.

Liner was also responsible for the creation of a student group known as the T.W.C. Ambassadors. These fourteen students, nominated by the faculty, served as official hosts for all college events related to development, recruitment, and alumni relations. In their attractive uniforms of dark skirts or trousers and blue and gold blazers, the Ambassadors welcomed visitors, conducted campus tours, and traveled to area high schools to aid in recruitment.

Growth in enrollment, while certainly a welcome situation, brought with it the need for more faculty and for additional facilities. Early in 1960, President Mohney reported to the trustees that the college could not possibly "meet the tremendous demands upon facilities for housing students unless plans are immediately made to provide additional housing." A development program was launched to secure funds for plant expansion as well as to increase endowment. Designated "Decade of Destiny, 1960-70," this program proposed to raise three million dollars during the ten-year period. The program was adopted officially by the trustees in May 1961 and launched at a kickoff dinner attended by a large group of college supporters. The initial phase of the campaign had as its goal the sum of 1.8 million dollars for immediate plant expansion.<sup>2</sup>

For assistance in the development program, President Mohney secured the services of Marvin Osborn and Roy Shilling. Osborn was a professional financial consultant who advised several other colleges and universities and who made periodic trips to Wesleyan to work with those involved in development. Roy Shilling was added to the administrative staff as director of development. Described by Mohney as "one of the finest young development officers in the field," Shilling was serving as development director at McMurray College in Texas at the time of his appointment. At Tennessee Wesleyan, he quickly established his ability as a fund raiser, securing over \$300,000 in excess of the usual donations during the first year of service. Shilling served until 1964 when Jack King assumed the duties of development director.<sup>3</sup>

Assistance in funding for buildings was made available by a new federal government program which offered loans to colleges for construction of buildings to accommodate the increased student population of the early sixties. After a loan of \$800,000 was approved, the construction of two buildings began in the fall of 1961.

One of the buildings was the long-awaited fine arts center which had been approved by the trustees in 1954 after Tom Sherman donated land for such a structure

to be named in honor of Laura T. Sherman. Construction was delayed due to lack of sufficient funding, but Sherman continued to make substantial contributions toward the project. To honor both Tom and Laura Sherman, the trustees approved, in 1961, the naming of the building the Sherman Fine Arts College Center.

Continued growth in enrollment soon made clear that the Sherman building could not be devoted exclusively to fine arts programs. Plans were revised to provide for a building which would house not only classrooms and offices for the fine arts departments but also a student center with a dining hall, snack shop, bookstore, post office, student lounge, chaplain's office, and a small chapel. The groundbreaking ceremony was held in October 1961, with Tom Sherman as a major participant.

A few days after the groundbreaking for the Sherman building, a similar ceremony was held for the Lucy Hornsby Fowler Residence Hall for Women, a dormitory made possible by a gift from the Fowler family. This ceremony was led by Lucy Fowler's son, Harley Fowler, a trustee whose family had been long associated with the college. Lucy Hornsby Fowler was the daughter of one of the college's founders and the wife of General James A. Fowler who was connected with the school as alumnus, professor, trustee, and loyal supporter.

Genevieve Wiggins, who came to the college as English instructor in 1961, recalls that the early part of her tenure found faculty members marching over uneven terrain in full academic regalia to participate in groundbreaking ceremonies. President Mohney's mastery of and insistence on proper protocol gave assurance that, under his leadership, all college events were conducted with dignity and good taste.

Fowler Hall, housing 128 students, replaced Ritter Hall as a women's dormitory. The older dormitory originally belonged to the Women's Division of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church but was deeded to the college by the women's society in 1963. After renovation, Ritter was used chiefly as the location for offices and classrooms of the business and education departments. It was also the site of the dining hall until that facility was moved to Sherman.

Plans were being made for a new science building, but this project was longer in reaching fulfillment. Banfield Hall had housed science classrooms and laboratories since 1902. Equipment had been upgraded periodically but badly needed modernization. Dr. M. Gilbert Beniford, a chemistry professor at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, visited the campus in the summer of 1960 as a participant in a visiting scientist program of the American Chemical Society. Asked to evaluate the science facilities, Beniford gave his assessment in a letter which President Mohney shared with the trustees and which included the statement:

I am sorry to say that the laboratories available for both chemistry and physics are the poorest that I have seen in a good many years of travel to other institutions in the country. I strongly recommend the construction of a completely new building rather than the remodeling of Banfield.



A further assessment by an engineering consultant reinforced the opinion that a new building was necessary for a properly equipped science facility.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Fisher provided a gift of \$150,000 toward a new science building. This generous donation was, at that time, the largest single gift ever made to the college. President Mohney was authorized by the trustees to proceed with plans for a structure of 300,000 square feet at an estimated cost of \$471,600, including furnishings, and to be named Fisher Hall of Science.<sup>5</sup>

A campaign soliciting contributions from local industries and from foundations brought the Fisher fund to \$243,000 by 1963. More assistance came after the passage of the Educational Facilities Act in 1964.

In a newspaper column written more than forty years later, Nell Mohney recalled the prayerful concern of both her husband and herself for financing the science building. Among the grants sought was one from the Kresge Foundation in Detroit. "Hundreds of other small private colleges were making the same request," Mrs. Mohney wrote, "so the possibilities of receiving it quickly were unlikely, but it was front and center of our prayer list." A request came from a friend in Johnson City for a performance there by the college choir and the presence of the Mohnneys at a dinner party afterwards. Was it coincidence or an answer to prayer that among the dinner guests were Stanley and Dorothy Kresge? The college received the Kresge grant.<sup>6</sup>

The science building fund had grown to \$600,000 by the spring of 1965. However, the lowest contractor's bid and the architect's fee called for an additional \$76,000, and Mohney's tenure ended before the realization of his dream, for Fisher Hall did not open until 1967. The proposed building, planned and discussed for some seven years, began to seem a pie-in-the-sky project. A 1964 April Fool's edition of *The New Exponent*, made up of stories of humorous improbabilities, reported the actual construction of a new science building and included a photograph of biology instructor Carolyn Bradley, hoe in hand, breaking ground for the long-awaited structure.

Other projects were completed more readily. The Beene Tennis Center was funded by industrialist Jones Beene III in honor of his father Jones Beene II who had been the college's first football coach. The younger Beene served as tennis coach, without pay, until the arrival of Van Coe who added tennis coaching to his duties as economics professor. The Merner-Pfeiffer Library was renovated to provide additional shelving space by removing classrooms of the art department to Moffitt Hall.

Moffitt Hall, a wooden, army pre-fabricated building, painted dark green, also housed the offices of the English department. The English faculty referred affectionately to their quarters as "the low green necessity." In 1963, the building became less utilitarian in appearance when modernistic art work, designed by instructor Martha Hale and painted by her students, was added to the shutters.

Growing enrollment brought the necessity of adding and retaining well-qualified faculty members. A major frustration for President Mohney was the college's low salary scale which made it difficult to keep teachers from leaving to seek more lucrative positions. On one occasion, Mohney reported to the trustees that "only an increase

in Wesleyan's financial position so as to become competitive with more able institutions can assure us of the possibility of completing our staff requirements."<sup>7</sup>

The faculty problem was intensified in 1962 by a new ruling by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools that increased the percentage of faculty members required to hold terminal degrees from twenty percent to thirty percent. This requirement, to be met by 1964, meant that Tennessee Wesleyan must increase the number of faculty with doctorates by seventy-five percent over the next two years.

In 1960, the average annual salary for faculty members was \$5,375. By 1965, the figure had increased to \$6,414, still lower than the national average for private colleges, \$7,853, and considerably lower than the compensation offered by state institutions. In spite of the handicap of poor wages, some faculty members recruited by Mohny found the college's mission and its working conditions adequate reasons for continuing service to the institution until retirement. Among them were Dr. Floyd "Jack" Bowling, Alton Smith, Dr. Genevieve Wiggins, Courtney Senn, Dr. Herbert Neff, and Librarian Louise Harms.

The early sixties brought the loss of some outstanding teachers and administrators. These included Dr. Richard Johnson (biology), Jack Houts (music), Dr. Albert Bowman (history), and Dean Robert Mildram.

Dr. Richard Johnson, having served for nine years, resigned in 1960 to accept a position at West Georgia College. Jack Houts left in 1962 for Florida Southern. During his fifteen-year tenure, Houts had developed an outstanding choir and had directed, with the assistance of Harry Coble of the drama department, fifteen spring musicals, the last of these being *South Pacific*.

In the spring of 1962, Dr. Albert Bowman accepted a position as librarian at the University of Chattanooga. Dean Robert Mildram resigned in 1962 to become the academic dean of Defiance College in Ohio. Others, including E. G. Rogers, Fred Whitehead, and Claryse Myers, were lost through their retirement.

President Mohny stated as a major goal of his administration "to identify future faculty members who not only give evidence of highest academic ability but also of genuine spiritual devotion and concern." Emphasis on both the academic and the spiritual was much in evidence during the Mohny years.<sup>8</sup>

The value placed on both the academic and the spiritual was demonstrated by the appointment, in 1962, of Dr. Frank Gulley as academic dean. A graduate of the University of Kentucky with a B.A. in history, Gulley held a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Emory University and a Ph.D. from Vanderbilt. He had been assistant pastor of a Methodist church in Atlanta, had served as assistant to the dean and as an instructor at Vanderbilt Divinity School, and, at the time of his appointment, was Director of the United Protestant Education Board at the University of Illinois.<sup>9</sup>

Raising the college's academic standards was a major concern of both President Mohny and Dean Gulley. Acquisition of superior faculty members was viewed as of primary importance, but curriculum revisions also played a part. To assure that all students were adequately prepared in the basic fields of English, foreign language, so-

cial sciences, mathematics, and speech, a Foundation Curriculum was adopted which all students were expected to complete successfully. The major in secondary education was eliminated and replaced by the requirement that a prospective high school teacher major in the subject field he or she expected to teach as well as complete education courses required for teacher certification. A foreign language was required in all curricula with the exception of business and elementary education. An English Proficiency Examination required all prospective graduates to demonstrate their ability to write a 500-word essay containing no major grammatical errors. This was the dreaded "Junior English Exam," a stumbling block for many.

Rules for academic dismissal and probation were strengthened. At the 1961 fall meeting of the trustees, President Mohney reported that twenty-eight students had been dismissed for academic reasons and that an even larger number had been placed on academic probation.<sup>10</sup>

In 1961, for the first time, each prospective student was required to submit a satisfactory score on the American College Test (ACT) or on a comparable entrance examination. Test scores confirmed that Wesleyan was attracting more capable students. In 1962, the average ACT score of entering freshmen was 17.9, but by 1965 the average had climbed to 20.4. However, admission records did not indicate that more students were being denied admission. School officials attributed this to the growing recognition of T.W.C. as an institution of academic excellence which led to fewer students with poor academic records seeking admission.<sup>11</sup>

The efforts of the president, dean, and faculty brought the college to a position highly respected beyond the immediate area. Only one of many examples of this respect came when a student at the University of the South wished to take a summer course at a school nearer her home. Her advisor at Sewanee recommended Tennessee Wesleyan as an institution where credits earned were accepted without question by the University of the South.

The decade of the sixties brought with it the necessity of dealing with integration. In the late fifties, trustees had considered the subject but taken no action. In 1961, Mrs. Henry Cade, wife of the pastor of First United Presbyterian Church, applied for admission to take courses in education. The trustees allowed her admission but still were reluctant to institute a general policy on admission of African-American students. In May 1962, President Mohney received a letter from Harper Johnson, principal of J. L. Cook High School, requesting that faculty members of this all-black school be permitted to take education courses leading to certification or recertification. Johnson limited his request to evening and summer classes and stated his case with wisdom and sensitivity. He wrote:

If for any reason you feel this request is not in keeping with good or logical conduct and that it transgresses the spiritual conviction of your institution, then I hereby withdraw my request. The ideal, of course, would be to let all qualified persons enter and study, but I know that such a request might not

go too well. I feel that college graduates in the teaching field might not cause any undue alarm.<sup>12</sup>

The following October the trustees approved the admission of qualified black students to evening and summer classes.

One year later, in the fall of 1963, the decision to admit African-American students to all college programs was announced. President Mohney reported that this integration was "accomplished in such a manner as to reflect high honor for students, faculty, townspeople, and trustees." The three students who broke the segregation barrier in 1963 were Gatha Hardaway, a transfer from Knoxville College; Eddie Jackson, a graduate of Medina High School in Ohio; and Melba Wilson, a special student in the evening school. All three, Mohney reported, "exhibited an excellent spirit during the transition period." Mohney also praised the local press and townspeople who had contributed to the calm transition.<sup>13</sup>

Although the racial barrier to admission was now eliminated, there was no ensuing surge of black students. Only a small number came in the sixties, perhaps because the tuition cost of a private college was substantially greater than that of a state-supported institution, an obstacle faced by white students as well.

The first black student to graduate from Tennessee Wesleyan was Gatha Hardaway of Athens who received a B.S. in biology in June 1967. In August of the same year, Elaine Upton of Sweetwater was awarded a B.A. in English. Both Hardaway and Upton were honor students who continued their education to receive graduate degrees and who are remembered as sources of pride by their alma mater.

Although the cost of attending Tennessee Wesleyan during the mid-sixties seems modest by today's standards, it was considered high for that period. During the mid-sixties, tuition was \$45 for each three-quarter-hour course; lodging ranged from \$62.50 to \$70.84 quarterly, depending upon the dormitory; meals were \$145.84 per quarter. The average cost of textbooks for the full school year was about \$70, often the cost of one textbook for today's college student. This brought the total annual cost to about \$1,200.<sup>14</sup>

In the fall of 1963, a significant drop in enrollment occurred, attributed by President Mohney to rising tuition costs. The drop was especially noticeable among commuting students. A local student could attend a state institution for a year at a total cost of about \$200 more than Wesleyan's tuition cost alone. President Mohney reported to the trustees that "our tuition is not exceeded by any area college and is equaled only by two other private institutions in East Tennessee, Maryville College and the University of Chattanooga." Operational costs could not feasibly be reduced, so the only solution was increased financial aid. The President's Advisory Board came to the rescue by providing modest commuter scholarships amounting to a maximum of \$145 per academic year for a student living within commuting distance. This aid resulted in some alleviation of the problem. Fall enrollment in 1965 reached 829 with 745 fulltime students as compared to 714 in the previous year.<sup>15</sup>



The period of the sixties was a lively time at the college with an increasing number of bright, energetic young people. National Greek-letter organizations prominent in student life included Phi Sigma Kappa, Pi Kappa Phi, and Sigma Phi fraternities and Alpha Xi Delta, Kappa Delta and Sigma Kappa sororities. (Phi Mu sorority was added later.) A highlight of the college year was Greek Weekend during which fraternities and sororities competed for trophies in a series of events—Field Day, Skit Night, and Greek Bowl. Another popular event, initiated in 1965 by Pi Kappa Phi, was All Sing. Fraternities and sororities as well as other campus organizations diligently honed their vocal skills in the hope of presenting the winning musical number.

Fraternities and sororities provided numerous social activities and established strong ties of friendship. When Dr. Shelley Griffith and his wife Judi (nee Cunningham) were asked to pinpoint their fondest memory of college days, they responded without hesitation that it was their participation in a fraternity and sorority.

Not all was fun and games with the Greek-letter organizations, for they participated in numerous service projects including support of such worthy causes as the Heart Association, March of Dimes, Toys for Tots, and the Lion's Club program of assistance to the visually-impaired.

The governing organization of the Greek-letter societies was the Panhellenic Council consisting of the presidents of each organization, their faculty sponsors, the Dean of Students (Floyd Bowling), and the Dean of Women (Mary Rogers Watkins and later Carolyn Staley).

Students who did not join a fraternity or sorority could belong to the Independents, an organization formed chiefly for participation in intramural sports. Several other organizations were active in campus life. A new service organization for men made its appearance on campus in 1962. Circle K, sponsored by the Athens Kiwanis Club, had a sizeable membership and encouraged leadership, citizenship, and personal initiative.

Religious groups fostered spiritual growth among students. Voluntary worship services were held on Monday mornings at Trinity Methodist Church under the direction of the Student Christian Association. The S.C.A. also provided a Wednesday evening discussion and a coffee house known as En Garde. On Wednesday mornings, a compulsory chapel service in Townsend Auditorium was directed by Chaplain Howard Hinds (affectionately dubbed by students "Happy Chappy") assisted by the Religious Life Council. In 1965, Howard Hinds was replaced by Chaplain Douglas Lewis.

Chi Rho, an organization for those planning or contemplating a church-related vocation, met monthly for fellowship and discussion. The student body contained several practicing Methodist ministers who formed a group named the Circuit Riders which was sponsored by Chaplain Hinds. In 1965 this group included Larry Caylor, Charles Dixon, Robert Ingram, Jack Martin, Ken Myers, and Jim Rutherford. Religious Emphasis Week, an annual event, brought notable speakers to the campus.

Clubs for those interested in particular fields were also available. These included

Alpha Psi Omega (drama), Beta Beta Beta (biology), Delta Rho Mu (music), Pi Beta Lambda (business), Pi Kappa Phi (debate), and Pi Gamma Mu (social sciences).

In keeping with the emphasis on academic excellence, a new organization known as Wesleyan Scholars was inaugurated in 1962. Membership consisted of a select student group, elected annually, who demonstrated high scholastic achievement and good character. The program offered superior students an opportunity to enrich their education through independent study which earned college credit. Under the direction of a faculty committee, headed by Professor Mildred Archer, the scholars read selected books, wrote and presented seminar papers, and attended cultural events in nearby cities. The first students to be selected as Wesleyan Scholars were Bill Albritton, Arthur Bigham, Joe Burger, Allen Dennis, Betty Douglas, Horace Maynard (Bud) Ellis III, Jim Ellis, R. V. Jennings, Steve Kyker, June Moore, Kay Rayfield, Sandra Thompson, and Karen Treher.<sup>16</sup>

The debate program which had been so strong earlier in the century was revived and again brought honor to the college. The 1963-64 debate team, coached by speech instructor William Yates, consisted of varsity debaters Bill Albritton, Tommy Burnett, Allen Dennis, and R. V. Jennings along with ten novice debaters. This team participated in eight tournaments and claimed victory over such formidable opponents as Vanderbilt, Duke, University of Tennessee, University of North Carolina, and Stetson. Tommy Burnett, also student body president, was named winner for extemporaneous speaking at the Appalachian Tournament, the state tournament, and the Phi Kappa Delta Regional Tournament. Another successful year for debaters came in 1964-65. The varsity squad captured first place in the Southeast Province Tournament while the novice team won in the Carson-Newman Invitational and placed second in the Middle Tennessee State Novice Tournament. Varsity debaters were Allen Dennis, Frances Freestone, Haney Howell, Rick Myers, and Curtis Sims. The novice team was made up of Margaret Edds, Rachel Edds, Judy Johnson, Bill Ketchersid, Fred MacArthur, Charlotte McManus, Ann Pratt, and David Stapley.<sup>17</sup>

The college choir continued to flourish under the direction of Andrew Harper who replaced Jack Houts in 1963. The traditions of the spring tour and the spring musical production were continued by a choir of over seventy voices. *The Music Man*, *Pirates of Penzance*, and *My Fair Lady* charmed large audiences. Who could forget Darnell Chance's rendition of "On the Street Where You Live," Sue Ella Hankins singing "I Could Have Danced All Night," the combined voices of Harry Coble (drama professor) and Tom Gutridge in "I Think She's Got It," or Lundy Lovelace's rollicking performance of "Get Me to the Church on Time"?

Professor Harper also organized a band of some twenty members who performed at sports events and for assembly programs.

A growing interest in publications drew a sizeable number of students to the staffs of the yearbook, *Nocatula*, and the newspaper, *New Exponent*. Under the direction of Ben H. McClary, English instructor, quite creative issues of the *Nocatula* were produced. The campus newspaper had for a number of years been the *Bulldog*. Under

the sponsorship of Genevieve Wiggins, the paper returned to its earlier title of *New Exponent*. Wiggins considered this title more dignified, less "high-schoolish," and more in keeping with the quality of journalism which she hoped to foster.

Intercollegiate sports were basketball, golf, tennis, and, until its discontinuance in 1964, baseball. The 1959-60 basketball team, coached by Buddy Cate, posted twenty wins and only seven losses as they placed first in the Eastern Division of The Volunteer State Athletic Conference and in the Smoky Mountain Athletic Conference. Jerry Edmonds was voted most valuable player in the VSAC tournament. Edmonds and Ronny Campbell were named to the VSAC All-Conference Team, and Ronnie Ely and Tommy Springfield made the Smoky Mountain Athletic All-Conference Team. The 1961-62 team posted fifteen wins and five losses while the 1962-63 Bulldogs had sixteen winning games and only three losses. One of the wins was over archrival Carson-Newman, a cause for great jubilation.

The 1961-62 tennis season was one of the best ever. Led by Jackie Robinson and Dewey Davidson, the Bulldogs of Coach Van Coe placed first in the Eastern Division of the VSAC. After two initial losses, to Carson-Newman and the University of Tennessee, the tennis squad reeled off fifteen consecutive wins.

It was during this period that Helen Ellis took a bold step toward equal opportunity for women athletes as she asked Coach Van Coe to be allowed to play on the tennis team. The coach replied that her request would be granted if she could win over a designated male player. She won the match and won an opening for women tennis players. Helen Ellis Walker belongs to a family which figures large in the college's history. Her grandfather, her father, and her siblings attended Wesleyan, and the family long has been among the college's strongest supporters.

It has been said that all Americans alive on November 22, 1963, remember exactly where they were when they heard the news of President Kennedy's assassination. Those on the campus of Tennessee Wesleyan were no exception. Their joyful anticipation of the Thanksgiving holidays turned to outrage and sadness. An impressive memorial service was held on November 25, and the campus U.S. flag was at half mast for the remainder of the calendar year.

Reflecting a national trend, increased student interest in politics, both local and national, became apparent. Participation in student government elections brought the college recognition as the Southern college with the highest percent of students voting, ninety-four percent.

In April 1964, students staged a mock Republican convention, a two-day affair held in Townsend Auditorium with all the fanfare and following the same procedures as the actual convention to be held in July. Senator Peter Dominick of Colorado accepted an invitation to appear as keynote speaker. Also present was Congressman William Brock. When all the campaign speeches ended and the votes were counted, student delegates had nominated Senator Barry Goldwater as the presidential candidate and Governor George Romney as his running mate.<sup>18</sup>

The Vietnam War was of great concern to students, and their opinions were as

divisive as those of the general public. An opinion survey by the *New Exponent* conducted in 1965 revealed student reactions ranging from strong support of the war's fight against communism to ardent disapproval of the involvement of the U.S.<sup>19</sup>

The student unrest and rebellion of the sixties barely touched the Athens campus. A few notes from "the Falcon, symbol of student concern" mysteriously appeared to alert those seen as threatening academic freedom and student rights. An occasional panty raid was of little concern to anyone except Dean Bowling. There was at least one feeble attempt at "streaking," but in typical TWC fashion, the streakers chose to race down the street in their underwear rather than in the nude.

Of greatest concern to President Mohney was open display of affection between male and female students. Such conduct was particularly evident at the entrance of Fowler Hall at curfew time as coeds bade a fond farewell to male escorts. At one fall faculty meeting, President Mohney urged teachers to remind their charges of proper conduct, closing with the question, "Ladies and gentlemen, if students are behaving thus in the fall, what will it be like in the spring?"

Modern technology on the historic campus began in a small way in 1963. Student registration for classes, long considered a nightmare by both students and faculty, was improved by the introduction of IBM equipment, including the card punch, sorter, and accounting machine.

Changes were occurring, and most were welcome, but one change caused student concern. With the construction of the Sherman building, students were fearful that they might lose "Burkett's," long a highly popular student hangout. Affection felt for the "hole in the wall" was expressed in the 1963 *Nocatula*: "The only sad fact about the opening of the Sherman Fine Arts College Center was that it marked the passing of Burkett's, long a campus institution." Hamburgers and other tasty food served by Burkett Witt actually were a small factor in the popularity of the eatery and gathering spot. Rather, it was the affable Burkett himself who attracted students to the shop. He first became associated with Wesleyan students with the opening of the Southern Soda Shop located across the street from Mars Hill Presbyterian Church in a building once headquarters for the East Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia Railroad. The shop was owned by Bo Witt (no relation to Burkett) and Pete Wilson. Burkett worked there until 1956 when he moved to the campus and began operating "Burkett's," located behind the president's office in the rear of Townsend Hall. Here he continued to dish out both appetizing food and friendly conversation. His shop also offered student supplies such as pens, pencils, notebooks, art supplies, TWC pennants, and freshman beanies. When the dining hall and soda shop opened in the Sherman building, Burkett's closed, but Witt went to work for Morrison's Cafeteria which had been granted the contract to operate both the dining hall and the soda shop. He continued as a chef for Morrison's until 1971 when he took over the soda shop which he and his wife, Mildred, operated until the early 1980s. Included in the tribute to him in the 1963 *Nocatula* were the words, "Burkett, with his pleasant manner and his intelligent



and ready wit, has done much to educate many students to an appreciation of racial tolerance.”

The 1963 edition of the *Nocatula* also contained a student tribute to Nell Mohney:

A more gracious first lady of Tennessee Wesleyan never lived in Blakeslee Hall. She is both an ornament and a support for activities of the college whether welcoming students and guests of the college or making one of her frequent talks to area civic and religious organizations. Mrs. Mohney is a representative of Tennessee Wesleyan at its charming best.

A notable event of the summer of 1965 was the awarding of an honorary Doctor of Music to Ernest Jennings Ford, “Tennessee Ernie.” Ford, a native of Bristol, Tennessee, and a lifelong Methodist, was one of America’s most popular singers and television personalities. Since Ford’s schedule prevented his presence at the regular spring commencement, a special ceremony was held in the summer. His appearance drew a large crowd which was excited by the opportunity to see him but a bit disappointed that he did not sing. Ford had previously stated his opinion that such a performance would detract from the dignity of the occasion. It is true that “Sixteen Tons” or “Mule Train” would hardly have been appropriate, but it was felt that he might have favored his host of admirers with one of the hymns for which he was also famous.

The Ford ceremony was Mohney’s final appearance as president, for he had announced his resignation the previous May, having accepted an appointment as minister of Centenary United Methodist Church in Chattanooga. In commenting on this decision, he said:

I consider Tennessee Wesleyan to be in the finest period of her long and illustrious history. Tremendously significant events are now taking place on the campus. Our tenure has been one of great excitement and joy in the progress that has been achieved. My family and I reluctantly relinquish this significant position, and yet, at the same time, we are honored to be chosen for the opportunity to serve the appointment which will be ours.<sup>20</sup>

During President Mohney’s six-year tenure, significant progress was made in enrollment, building construction, faculty strength, and financial stability. Enrollment had grown from 554 full-time students in 1959 to 745 in 1965. Additions to the campus included the Sherman Fine Arts Center, the Lucy Hornsby Fowler Hall, and the Beene Tennis Center. The Fisher Hall of Science was planned and considerable funding acquired for its construction. The number of faculty members increased from twenty-eight to forty-six, and faculty salaries were significantly improved. The annual budget grew from \$466,900 to \$1,024,000, and the endowment fund increased by fifty-two percent.

At the fall meeting of the trustees' executive committee, Dr. W. D. Sullins, chairman, submitted a resolution that appreciation be expressed for Mohney's accomplishments on behalf of the college and of Christian higher education. Adoption of the resolution was unanimous and enthusiastic.<sup>21</sup>

Dean Frank Gulley was appointed acting president, a position he filled admirably during a six-month period. A special committee, appointed by the trustees, began an immediate search for a new president.

At the fall meeting of the trustees, Dr. Gulley reported that the college's financial situation was encouraging. The 1964-65 fiscal year not only ended in the black but with a balance of \$32,000. He stated that the budget for 1965-66 had been set at \$1,126,000 but that an additional \$75,000 would be needed to cover salaries for new faculty as well as modest pay increases for current faculty and staff. Echoing an appeal often expressed by President Mohney, Gulley emphasized that "financial resources must be identified which will permit the college to attract quality academic leadership" and to retain well-qualified faculty members who were "constantly lured by attractive offers elsewhere."<sup>22</sup>

On November 11, 1965, R. R. Kramer, trustees' chairman, announced the appointment of a new president. The college would see new accomplishments and face new challenges under the leadership of Charles Turner.

## CHAPTER 11

### CHANGES AND CHALLENGES: 1966-1974



**“Unchangeable, almighty Lord  
Our souls upon thy truth to stay;  
Accomplish now thy faithful word,  
And give, O give us all one way.”**

*- Charles Wesley*

President Charles Turner received a warm welcome from Athenians, some 350 of whom greeted him at a reception held in the Sherman Fine Arts Center. The general consensus seemed to be that the trustees had made a wise decision in their selection of a leader who demonstrated both strong credentials and a warm personality. Joining Turner as new members of the T. W. C. family were his charming wife, Elizabeth, and daughters, Beverly, a freshman at Birmingham Southern, and Diane, a high school sophomore.

President Turner had the distinction of being the first president in T. W. C.'s long history who was not a Methodist minister, a situation considered an advantage by some and a disadvantage by others. He was, however, the son of a minister and brought to his new appointment wide experience in fields related to Methodism and to higher education. As a member of the administrative staff of Huntingdon College in Montgomery, Alabama, since 1949, he had served as both dean of students and executive secretary. At the time of his selection as T. W. C.'s new leader, he was acting president at Huntingdon, holding that position because of the illness of the president. Moreover, he had served the Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church for two years as director of youth and for an additional two years as executive secretary. As a staff member of the General Board of Education of the United Methodist Church, he had worked actively in the Crusade for Christ movement. His education included a B. A. from Birmingham Southern, an M. A. in higher education administration from George Peabody College, and additional postgraduate courses at Emory University.

The first problem facing Turner when he assumed office in January 1966 was the eminent departure of Dean Frank Gulley. Gulley, a particularly strong academic dean, had been a major force in raising academic standards and building a highly qualified faculty. As early as April 1965, he had accepted a position as librarian and professor

of church history at the Vanderbilt School of Theology. Planning to assume his new position in the fall of 1965, Gulley had been persuaded by the trustees to remain as acting president until the position of president had been filled. He had then applied for and been granted a one-year extension by Vanderbilt. President Turner tried unsuccessfully to retain Gulley who left in March 1966. The position of acting dean was assumed by faculty member M. C. Smith until the appointment of Dr. Toombs H. Kay, Jr. two months later.

As academic dean, Dr. Toombs Kay proved to be a competent administrator, and his warm and affable personality endeared him to faculty and students. His educational background included a B. A. from Duke University, a B. D. from Emory University, and a Ph.D. from New York University. He came to Wesleyan from Reinhardt, a Methodist college in Georgia, where he had served as academic dean.

Early in his tenure, President Turner made a careful study of the state of the college, and, at the February meeting of the trustees, reported on what he considered to be strengths and weaknesses. Strengths included a strong faculty, an able administrative staff, and a student body of above-average ability. He perceived as a weakness the lack of administrative organization, resulting in "confusion, expense, and waste." An even more serious weakness was found in physical facilities, which failed to meet minimal requirements, especially in the area of student housing. Institutions with modern, attractive housing appealed to students, he said, and in order to be competitive, Wesleyan must expand and improve residential facilities.<sup>1</sup>

Turner challenged the trustees to "think big." He envisioned two possibilities for the college. It might maintain the status quo, making no major changes, but he feared that this path would lead, within ten years, to the school's being completely engulfed by the "swirling events" occurring in the field of higher education. The more desirable possibility was to move boldly forward to make Wesleyan "dynamic and effective enough to render noble service for another century and more."<sup>2</sup>

As always, the question arose as to funding for proposed improvements. The president ruled out "going to the church right now" to ask for a fundraising campaign. He also cautioned against an increase in tuition lest the college "price itself out of the market" in student recruitment. He advocated an individual approach, urging trustees to identify and cultivate potential donors.<sup>3</sup>

By May, Turner had worked out a more specific plan for raising six million dollars. At a joint meeting of the advisory board and the trustees' executive committee, he proposed the acquisition of two million dollars for the construction of two residence halls and an academic building along with the renovation of existing buildings, the purchase of additional land, and improvement of faculty salaries. Another four million should be acquired for endowment.<sup>4</sup>

No formal fundraising campaign was planned. Instead, each member of the executive committee and of the advisory board was to locate one prospective donor who would be able to give at least \$25,000 toward the proposed projects. Names of these individuals would be submitted to the president who would solicit their support.



The president's plan for raising six million dollars was quickly approved by the executive committee, the advisory board, and the board of trustees.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, the plan fell short of expectations, and it soon became evident that professional help was needed. After a study of firms specializing in college financial campaigns, the trustees awarded a contract to Ward, Dreham, and Rinehart, Inc., at a cost to the college of \$102,000. Despite professional assistance, the campaign, labeled "Second Century Capital Crusade," failed to reach its goal. By October, only \$600,000 had been pledged, almost half of which came from Athenians.<sup>6</sup>

One major accomplishment of the Turner era was the construction of the Fisher Hall of Science for which most of the funding had been secured during the tenure of President Mohny. Completed in the spring of 1967, the building was formally dedicated in October with Mohny, appropriately, as the principal speaker and with the Fisher family in attendance.

Some revisions in the administrative staff occurred early in Turner's presidency. Walter Darby became business manager, replacing Tom Lotti who was named director of campus development. Charles "Buddy" Liner, director of admissions, left to accept a similar position at Tennessee Tech and was replaced by M. C. Smith.

With enrollment reaching an all-time high in 1967, the need for additional dormitory housing became urgent, and construction began on a residence hall which would accommodate 168 women. This building, completed during the summer of 1968, was financed through borrowed funds. Since no major donor, for whom the building might be named, had come forward, the dormitory was simply called New Hall.

Although the construction of New Hall seemed imperative due to increased enrollment, borrowing led to heavy indebtedness. Ironically, shortly after New Hall's completion, enrollment began to decline sharply, leaving the college with surplus dormitory space and a burdensome debt.

In spite of indebtedness, another building project was undertaken in 1968. Banfield Hall, constructed in 1902 as the science building, was no longer needed in that capacity with the completion of the Fisher Hall of Science. The old building was renovated for use as space for classrooms and offices by the English and business departments. Modernization of the old building included air conditioning, new carpeting and lighting, an improved stairwell, and a fire escape.

A sizeable gift toward the Banfield renovation came from Henry W. Durham, a retired Memphis businessman who had attended Wesleyan early in the twentieth century. Feeling that the generosity of Durham merited the building being named in his honor, Turner contacted former president James Robb for guidance. Robb assured him that a name change should present no problem, since the original donor was deceased, and since the building was no longer used for the purpose for which the earlier donation had been made. Nevertheless, it was generally felt that the Banfield name should not be forgotten. An appropriate memorial was supplied by the removal from the entrance of the top step, a concrete slab deeply indented by the footsteps of students entering the building over a period of sixty-eight years. The heavily worn

step was displayed near the front of the building with a memorial plaque reading:

**C. H. Banfield Memorial Hall**  
**1901—1968**

**The trail that was, and is, and must be worn...**

*Wordsworth*

By the late sixties, the Wesleyan landscape showed considerable change. Not only had two new buildings appeared and another been renovated, but other structures were being removed. The first such removal came when the arches on the eastern and western boundaries of the campus were taken down and discarded. This action brought expressions of disapproval from a number of alumni, especially from members of the classes of 1914 and 1918 who had donated the arches as their departing gift to their alma mater. The arches, particularly the eastern one on College Street, had served as official entrances to the college grounds, as a popular meeting place for students, and as a picture frame for the campus. To the trustees, President Turner described the arches as “of poor quality and not in keeping with the buildings which have recently been erected around them.” To the faculty, he added the explanation that he wanted the campus to have an open, welcoming atmosphere, and the arches gave the impression of exclusion.<sup>7</sup>

According to Louie Underwood, superintendent of buildings and grounds, the president directed that the arches be removed and hauled to a location near the entrance to the Pikwatina subdivision on Highway 11. This area was being filled with dirt, and the arches were eventually covered by tons of soil.<sup>8</sup>

Moffitt Hall also disappeared, and the English department moved offices from the “low, green necessity” to Durham Hall. However, the most noticeable change in the landscape was the razing of Ritter Hall and the creation of a parking lot in its stead. Ritter had been an important part of the landscape since 1891, but the large wooden structure was both expensive to maintain and a fire hazard. Its removal was practical but regretted by many alumnae who had resided there and who had fond memories of friendships made and good times shared. Some thirty years later, Anne Hayes Longley, a member of the class of 1955, erected a standing memorial marker on the site of Ritter.

Under the direction of Dean Kay, the faculty committee organization was revamped, and, for the first time, a student representative became a member of each faculty committee.

Another change came in the fall of 1968 with the introduction of a convocation program to replace the often-criticized required chapel attendance. As true children of the sixties, students were beginning to rebel against prescribed participation in a religious observance. Under the new plan, twenty convocations were available during each semester, some religious in nature and others offering educational lectures

and dramatic or musical performances. Students were required to attend a specified number of these but were given a choice as to which they would attend. Students welcomed the change, and Chaplain Robert Irwin felt that a boycott on chapel attendance had been avoided. Dean Kay called the new system a "tremendous improvement" which promised to enhance both the religious and educational background of students.<sup>9</sup>

Change was the spirit of the time and affected the academic program when, in the fall of 1970, the college moved from a traditional quarter system to a four-one-four calendar. The academic year was divided into two semesters of four months each, with an interim term of one month in January. During the interim, students concentrated on one course which met on five days weekly. Faculty members used the interim as an opportunity to design new courses, often in areas of their special interests and expertise. Courses involving travel fit nicely into the interim term, and trips to England, to Mexico, to New York, and to historic Williamsburg, Virginia, had enthusiastic participants.

The four-one-four program was a creative concept with many attractive features, but at T. W. C., it was not an unqualified success. Some college supporters failed to understand its purpose and were suspicious of the nontraditional approach. The average T. W. C. student was less than affluent and found it difficult to meet the added expense of travel. Moreover, change in the calendar made transfer difficult since most nearby colleges remained on the quarter system.

In contrast to many colleges and universities across the United States, Tennessee Wesleyan maintained a relatively calm atmosphere with no major campus disruptions. Several factors contributed to the absence of a great deal of student agitation. President Turner respected the views of students and held periodic "rap sessions" to answer student questions and concerns. Students now had representation on faculty committees and, beginning in the fall of 1973, on the board of trustees as well. Moreover, most students came from conservative backgrounds and tended to accept the status quo.

A mock presidential election held by students in October 1968 indicated the prevailing political stance. The Republican nominee, Richard Nixon, received 189 of the 305 votes cast; Democrat Hubert Humphrey garnered 65; Independent George Wallace was given 51 votes.

Some students were troubled by the general lack of student involvement in contemporary issues. Tom Clark, vice-president of the Student Government Association, attended a national conference of student leaders in 1969 where he met students deeply involved in political and social issues. Upon his return, he lamented the lack of such involvement on the part of his fellow students stating, "There may be some here who think about relevant issues, but so many others do not."<sup>10</sup>

The absence of major disruptions does not mean, however, that students were passive. As already noted, the opposition to required chapel attendance brought about a change in that policy. In the spring of 1963, the Student Government sent

President Turner a resolution calling for improved recreational facilities. The *New Exponent* editor, Stan Jones, expressed dissatisfaction with the college's orientation program for new students, calling it a weak and ineffective event "involving balloons and M&Ms." Jones conducted and published an opinion survey showing that a considerable number of students complained of the advisor-advisee program and called for a more thorough introduction to the library during orientation.<sup>11</sup>

Inevitably, the war in Vietnam was of concern to students who observed a Moratorium Day devoted to reflection on and discussion of the increasingly unpopular war. There were no demonstrations of the type occurring on some other campuses, but a petition calling for the war's end was sent to President Nixon and bore the names of numerous students. Black armbands were worn to mourn those killed in conflict, and the chapel was the scene of prayer vigils.

T. W. C. student Curwood Witt was appointed by Tennessee Selective Service Director Arnold Malone to the Tennessee Youth Advisory Board, a group which recommended potential draftees. Witt also represented Tennessee in the draft lottery, held in Washington on December 1, 1969, which instituted a random method of determining the manner and sequence of military inductions.

While members of the T. W. C. community were concerned with the situation in Vietnam, a financial crisis was developing closer home. Student enrollment was declining at the same time that inflation brought increased expenses. Competition from state institutions with lower fees had long been a problem, but the opening of two-year state community colleges proved devastating to the small private college in Athens. By the early 1970s, there were eight community colleges within the Holston Conference, and four of these were within a fifty-mile commuting distance of T. W. C.. Also, the four-one-four calendar brought a decline in the number of transfer students, a considerable percentage of whom had come to Wesleyan from junior colleges, especially from nearby Hiwassee College. Hiwassee remained on the quarter system, as did the majority of similar institutions, and transfer to a school with a different arrangement was confusing. A year after the four-one-four system was implemented, the number of transfer students dropped by about fifty percent.<sup>12</sup>

As has been noted, the financial campaign launched in 1966 had weak results. In the fall of 1969, President Turner reported to the trustees the existence of "a real crisis."<sup>13</sup>

Turner, forced to operate on a deficit budget by the end of the 1967-68 academic year, vented his frustration in a letter to the trustees' finance committee:

I took a strong stand in the beginning of this administration, in which you and the other trustees concurred, that if we ran a good program with sound academic and good business management, our constituency would respect it to the point that money would be available for doing the job.

All expenditures were justified, Turner maintained, writing "I have no apology for these deficits."<sup>14</sup>



In an effort to stem the flow of red ink, budget items were slashed. Since instruction was the largest area of operating expenses, the finance committee, in January 1971, ordered a reduction of faculty. Dean Kay carried out the directive "with deep regret," reducing faculty by seven members. This action affected the morale of both faculty and students. A group calling themselves "Concerned Students" included Tom Clark, president of the Student Government Association, and Rick Harrington, editor of the *New Exponent*. They were joined by Ray Neff, Ken Smith, and David Hambricht. In an eight-page document sent by the group to the trustees' executive committee, these student leaders wrote:

It is our hope that this will not be construed as an ultimatum, threat, or radical movement. It is with genuine concern for the institution and our feeling of responsibility to it that we express our thoughts as presented here.

The document went on to state a variety of concerns. The failure of the Second Century Capital Crusade was questioned as to whether it resulted from flaws in planning and execution or from "lack of fundraising efforts on the part of the president who was hired under the condition that he would not have to perform this function." Another concern was the "unethical distribution" of dismissal information in the faculty reduction, with many students knowing of personnel cuts before those dismissed were informed.<sup>15</sup>

The trustees' student affairs committee, consisting of S. B. Rymer, David Ensminger, Harold Bales, and W. D. Sullins, quickly responded to the document and held a two-day conference with students, hearing their concerns and attempting to lead them to an understanding of the necessity of faculty reduction. Student Government President Tom Clark was then invited to speak before the trustees' executive committee where he stated that students now had a better knowledge of the situation and were ready to act positively and constructively. President Turner added the comment, "We have to come out of this a better institution, and it will take trustees, faculty, administration and students to do it." David Ensminger stated that his group, the trustees, should accept a share of the responsibility for the college's plight. The committee called on President Turner to initiate a policy by which all interested in the college's welfare could act cooperatively to solve current problems. In a subsequent meeting with Turner, the Concerned Students offered to assist in raising money and in recruiting students, an offer graciously accepted by the president.<sup>16</sup>

A general spirit of goodwill prevailed for a time, but the financial situation continued to have its impact. Walter Darby, business manager since 1966, resigned to accept a position at a local bank. Alton Johnson was appointed as his replacement. The president notified the trustees that the college would end the 1971 fiscal year with a deficit of \$160,000 which, when added to previous deficits, brought the total to about \$500,000.

The college requested a moratorium on building payments for the 1971-72 fiscal year. The Department of Housing and Urban Development granted the request with

the stipulation that an objective study be made of the college's finances. Such a study, authorized by Turner, was conducted by Douglas Trout Associates. Following the study, the Holston Conference authorized a Crisis Campaign with a goal of \$500,000 to be raised. By May 1972, \$315,000 had been pledged with receipts of \$168,000.

The early 1970s brought difficult days to President Turner who was besieged by criticism of his administrative policies. He remarked that he gained comfort from reading LeRoy Martin's *History of Tennessee Wesleyan College* which chronicled the series of financial hardships survived by the college throughout its history.

Financial difficulties experienced by both Tennessee Wesleyan and nearby Hiwassee College caused trustees to consider a merger of the two institutions, both supported by the Holston Conference. Two campuses would be maintained, but the administrative staff could be reduced, a money-saving device, and the competition of the two schools for students and finances could be eliminated. The Tennessee Wesleyan staff was neither wildly enthusiastic nor vehemently opposed to the proposed merger. Hiwassee, however, made clear its strong opposition.

The merger proposal, first voiced in 1971, occupied the attention of trustees of Holston Conference colleges until 1975. Various committees were appointed, and frequent meetings involved heated discussions. Eventually, early in 1975, the controversy was resolved. Dr. James Franks, chairman of the "Special Committee to Promote and Coordinate the Relationship between Tennessee Wesleyan and Hiwassee," introduced to assembled trustees the resolution that the two colleges be merged into an institution to be known as Hiwassee Wesleyan College, a unification which the committee felt would maximize strengths and minimize weaknesses existing in the separate schools. Dr. Horace Barker, president of Hiwassee, quickly rose with a substitute resolution stating that the diversity of the two schools brought about a desirable condition and moving that they remain separate. Dr. Barker's motion received, by secret ballot, thirty-one affirmative votes and thirty-nine negative. Dr. Franks' proposal was approved by thirty-nine and opposed by thirty-one, the affirmative vote falling short of the required two-thirds majority. Thus, after four years of controversy, the merger proposal was dead.<sup>17</sup>

In the fall of 1973, 539 students were greeted by Michael O'Brien, the new dean of students appointed to replace Douglas Pearson who had resigned to accept a college presidency. As the former chaplain, O'Brien already had gained the respect and confidence of students. Another popular appointment was that of the Reverend Ray Robinson as chaplain. A T. W. C. alumnus, Robinson was serving as pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church and offered to assume his additional duties as chaplain without pay. The trustees' student affairs committee attributed a "marked improvement" in student morale to the work of O'Brien and Robinson.

Campus activities continued to center around Greek letter societies, but other organizations contributed to campus life. In 1966, the debate team, directed by English professor John Eckman, achieved notable success. Invited to participate in the Harvard University Invitational Debate Tournament, the T. W. C. debaters defeated

several formidable opponents, including Colgate University, Ohio Wesleyan, and Trinity College. Debate team members were: Curtis Sims, Margaret Edds, Frances Freestone, Dan Shrader, Jerry O'Meara, Clyde McKay, Jim Hill, Dave Stapley, Jim Gillespie, Peggy Blair, Janie Duncan, Laura Killian, Don Moore, and Mary Moore.<sup>18</sup>

Student athletes excelled in basketball and tennis. Alumnus Dwain Farmer returned to his alma mater in 1965 and led the basketball team on a winning streak. During the 1966-67 season, the team won twenty-seven games and the Volunteer State Athletic Conference title while having only five losses. Champion hoopsters included Bobby Davis, Bobby Ferguson, Gilbert Dowell, John Saylor, Mike Olinger, Bobby Shorter, Ronnie Barry, Rex Whaley, Gene Raymer, Clyde Abernathy, Sam Hall, Bill Westmoreland, Hurman Shelton, Raymond Smith, and Larry Rhodes. The champion tennis team included: Alan Cornelius, Raymond Barr, Mike Bowling, Wayne Pritchard, Jim Emery, and Wayne Penniman.<sup>19</sup>

Financial difficulties, declining enrollment, and the Vietnam War provided ample reasons for gloom, but there was always plenty to laugh about. A favorite boner of the period concerned a remark made by the student body president to Elizabeth Turner, the campus's gracious first lady. Shortly after the arrival of the Turner family, Mrs. Turner undertook to improve the grounds of Blakeslee Hall and was often seen, hoe and trowel in hand, planting flower beds. At a reception given by the Turners for student leaders, the rather shy SGA president (who shall remain anonymous) tried desperately to think of something nice to say to his hostess. What he came up with was, "Mrs. Turner, I understand that you're a champion hoer." Only when the last word left his lips did he realize that he had just called the president's wife a *whore*!

On a sadder note, the college lost two of its most faithful servants during the years of the Turner administration. Paul Riviere retired in 1967 after nineteen years of notable service. Always willing to serve where most needed, Riviere had held the positions of dean of students, academic dean, dean of admissions, registrar, and history professor. In 1970, the entire campus mourned the sudden death of J. Van Coe. A professor of economics and sociology, Coe was also a popular and proficient tennis coach.

Alumni, under the strong leadership of Rebecca Owen Jaquish, helped to underwrite, in 1973, a new scholarship program aimed at attracting more Methodist students. In spite of such worthy efforts, by the fall of 1974, there was reason for serious alarm. The previous year had ended with another deficit. Enrollment had declined to 438. Key personnel had resigned with Alton Johnson, business manager, leaving to accept a similar position at a community college and Dean Toombs Kay returning to the full-time ministry.

President Turner announced to the advisory council, meeting in September 1974, that the college would operate in the red by about \$55,000 and that the "substantial drop" in enrollment meant a loss in income of at least \$100,000. He had recently appointed a faculty member, Melvin Reynolds, as dean of admissions, and Reynolds was diligently seeking a recruiting staff to address the desperate problem of declin-

ing enrollment. Turner also informed council members of his recent meeting with a group of area bankers who had proposed a long-term loan to pay some short-term notes with no payment on the principal required for one year. This generous offer, he said, should give the college a "breathing spell."<sup>20</sup>

When the trustees' executive committee met in October, President Turner was not present. After reviewing the financial situation, the trustees held a lengthy discussion which included the question of to what degree the administration was responsible for the college's current condition. A motion passed that committee officers should visit with the president to apprise him of the trustees' concerns. Before that meeting occurred, however, President Turner notified Chairman Robert Wilcox that he had accepted a position as executive vice-president of Alabama Independent Colleges and that his resignation was to be effective on October 15.

Human beings, by their nature, tend to seek a scapegoat, and many critics were quick to blame President Turner for the college's problems. No doubt some mistakes in judgment were made, but consideration must be given to the situation existing at the time when Turner served. It seems that he accepted the position upon assurance that no major fundraising efforts would be required of him, yet he almost immediately was faced with the need to solicit funds. Most private colleges suffered enrollment loss from the rise of state community colleges, a problem which cannot be blamed upon the administration of such private colleges. Mounting costs within the national economy also contributed to the unfortunate situation. Moreover, the possibility of merger with Hiwassee had not yet been resolved, and a lack of unanimity existed among trustees. To a large extent, the president was the victim of conditions over which he had little or no control. Many who worked closely with Charles Turner remember him with great respect and affection.

An editorial in the local newspaper commented on the "many ill-fated barrages" experienced by the college and concluded:

Turner, in the eyes of some, may have made some inadvertent mistakes in the judgment of personnel and fiscal matters. However, his sincerity as an educator, his devotion as a churchman, and his effort to find solutions to a myriad of problems never wavered.<sup>21</sup>

After Turner's resignation, the trustees appointed an administrative committee to conduct the business of the college until a new president could be installed. Dr. Floyd (Jack) Bowling, faculty representative to the board of trustees, oversaw daily campus activities. Other committee members were: Dr. Sam McConnell, trustees' chairman and retired superintendent of Hamilton County Schools; Dr. Robert Wilcox, chairman of the trustees' executive committee and district superintendent of the Kingsport District of the United Methodist Church; and Dr. F. Heisse Johnson, former academic dean of T. W. C. and executive director of Holston Conference Colleges.

At the October meeting of the executive committee, Chairman Robert Wilcox reported a projected deficit of \$167,000, based on an equated full-time enrollment



of 386. While noting that the financial situation was a matter of “grave concern,” Wilcox stated that the good will and cooperation of banking institutions of Athens gave encouragement that immediate cash flow problems could be controlled. In appreciation of President Turner, Wilcox said, “Tennessee Wesleyan and the Holston Conference owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Charles Turner who has guided Tennessee Wesleyan through most of the turbulent sixties. He is a completely dedicated Christian gentleman and gave of his best during his nine-year term.”<sup>22</sup>

A presidential nominating committee was appointed and authorized to proceed with interviews of candidates. However, the matter of the merger with Hiwassee was still under discussion, and trustees were still uncertain as to whether they would be seeking a president for Tennessee Wesleyan alone or for a merged Hiwassee Wesleyan.

In November, students, college personnel, and community members were invited to hear a panel discussion on the future of the college. Serving on the competent panel were Dr. Bowling, Dr. Wilcox, Rebecca Jaquish, Scott Mayfield, Dr. W. D. Sullins, Richard Shivers, and David Ensminger. While seeking to alleviate fears that the college might soon close its doors, panel members stressed the urgency of church and community support. It was noted that “to the community of Athens, the college is its most vital industry.” Dr. Bowling gave the assurance that a dedicated faculty and staff were efficiently carrying on the daily business of the institution.

Some thirty applications for the position of president were received, but the nominating committee suspended interviews in January until a decision concerning the proposed merger could be reached. When the merger idea was defeated in February, the committee resumed work, and on April 4, 1975, the trustees announced the appointment of Dr. George Naff as fifteenth president of Tennessee Wesleyan College.

## CHAPTER 12

### FAITH AND RENEWAL: 1975-1984



**"A vessel fitted for thy use  
Into thy hands receive.  
Work in me both to will and do.  
And show them how believers true  
And real Christians live."**

*- Charles Wesley*

Tennessee Wesleyan trustees assembled at Knoxville's Second United Methodist Church on April 4, 1975, to hear the nomination of the college's next president. Speaking for the nominating committee, Dr. Heisse Johnson presented the name of Dr. George Naff who was elected unanimously.<sup>1</sup>

Following the vote, Dr. and Mrs. Naff were invited to enter the meeting room. After officially introducing the new president, Bishop L. Scott Allen presented him with a pair of shoe soles, one labeled "\$" and the other "Students," indicating what was expected of the president. Dr. Naff acknowledged the gift with typical good humor, saying, "I don't suppose I have ever received a more ungentle hint."

Gordon Sterchi, pastor of Fountain City United Methodist Church, presented Naff a check from his congregation, and Sam Neely, representing Bond Memorial United Methodist Church, made a similar contribution. Such donations symbolized the confidence felt in the leadership of Naff by churches and ministers of the Holston Conference.<sup>2</sup>

A few days after his election, the new president met with the executive committee and predicted "brighter days" ahead for Tennessee Wesleyan. He encouraged members of the committee to be frank and candid in a working relationship where he and committee members might "exercise real respect for each other." He concluded, "Count on me to give my best, and I will count on you to give your best, and we will maintain that kind of cordial relationship."<sup>3</sup>

The selection of Naff brought to the presidency a person seen by his peers as a man of "bedrock" integrity and a strong spiritual leader committed to the mission of the United Methodist Church. In the minds of many, he was the man to restore confidence in the institution among ministers and laity within the Holston Conference.<sup>4</sup>

A front-page editorial in *The Daily Post-Athenian* proclaimed that "a new era" had

dawned for Wesleyan. The editor went on to assert that "Dr. Naff may be untested in the realm of college presidency, but he brings to the office the quality of mettle necessary for the post. His educational background is solid. His spiritual activity is irreproachable, and he has proven to be a capable administrator as superintendent of one of the church districts."<sup>5</sup>

President Naff also brought another valuable asset to the Wesleyan campus and to the city of Athens in the person of his lovely and talented wife, Mary Ellen. A warm, gracious, and generous lady, Mrs. Naff shared her outstanding musical talents, her cheerfulness, and her hospitality with the entire college community. Other members of the Naff family included daughters Nancy and Ellen and son George.

At the time of his election as president, Naff was serving as superintendent of the Maryville District of the Holston Conference. A native of Cleveland, Tennessee, and a graduate of Emory and Henry College and of the Candler School of Theology of Emory University, Naff also held the Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Emory and Henry. The new president was no stranger to Wesleyan, having served as chaplain from 1946 to 1951. In his ministerial career, he had held six pastorates in the Holston Conference.

When Naff assumed the presidency in 1975, Tennessee Wesleyan had reached a low ebb and faced an uncertain future. The office had been vacant for six months; enrollment was down sharply, having fallen to below 400; a large operational deficit had accumulated; financial resources were rapidly drying up; and morale of both faculty and students was suffering. Some were concerned that the 118-year-old institution might actually have to close its doors. As a former member of the board of trustees, President Naff was fully aware of Wesleyan's situation and the enormity of his task. In view of the many problems that beset the institution, some wondered why Naff, in the middle of a successful career as a district superintendent, undertook such an awesome responsibility. When the question was put to him, he stated his conviction that Wesleyan had an important educational role to fulfill as a church-related institution. "Ever since I was here in the 1950s as chaplain and professor of religion," he said, "this college has held a cherished place in my affection. I have been convinced of its usefulness as an arm of the church and as an effective focus for Christian higher education." In an interview published in *Holston United Methodist*, the president set forth his goals for the college: "We are especially dedicated to being of service to the constituency of the United Methodist Church of the Holston Conference and to the loyal, supportive community of Athens." To that end, Naff worked tirelessly to direct the college toward reaffirming its historic Christian commitment.<sup>6</sup>

President Naff had little time for reflection about his task, for numerous problems needed a quick response. One of his first actions was to meet with faculty, staff, and student body to offer words of encouragement since a great deal of anxiety existed about the future of the college. At a called meeting of the faculty, he stated that his aim was to minimize differences between faculty and administration and that he hoped "friendships will be characteristic of a relationship of mutual respect," adding

that he intended to maintain an “open door policy” to listen to faculty concerns. The faculty responded by assuring the president of their support. Professor Courtney Senn moved “that the faculty express its appreciation to Dr. Naff for his willingness to assume responsibilities of the president in these difficult times and that we as faculty pledge our wholehearted support of him and his efforts to revitalize T. W. C.” Mike O’Brien added words of appreciation to Dr. Floyd (“Jack”) Bowling for providing “much of the glue that had held the school together since President Turner’s resignation.”<sup>7</sup>

Another pressing problem faced by President Naff was the need to fill key staff vacancies. Within a month after assuming office, he had made appointments to the positions of academic dean, chaplain, and director of admissions and financial aid and had secured two admission counselors.

Dr. Robert W. Evans, appointed as academic dean, came to the college from South Carolina where he had served as director of curriculum and instruction of the South Carolina State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education. His experience proved to be particularly valuable in developing programs for working adults wishing to continue their education.

A husband and wife team joined the staff when James (“Rusty”) Taylor was appointed director of admissions and financial aid and Mary Virginia Taylor became chaplain. Both were graduates of Candler School of Theology of Emory University. New faculty appointments included Durwood C. Dunn as instructor of history and political science and Wayne Norfleet as coach of women’s basketball and men’s baseball. These two intercollegiate sports were resurrected after several years of absence.

By late June, President Naff had sized up the college’s plight and the course of action needed to prevent, in his words, “Tennessee Wesleyan’s Waterloo.” He outlined his views in a document entitled “A T. W. C. Battle Plan,” which was distributed to staff, faculty, trustees, and advisory board members. Explaining the need for a “battle plan,” he wrote, “We are fighting a battle against the understandable impatience of the Holston Conference and of a number of trustees over operating with deficit budgets and the projected budget deficit, plus the question—how long will you continue to do the same old things that have been unproductive?” He went on to describe a number of “enemies” the institution was “battling”: low tuition and aggressive recruitment by state institutions, statistics projecting student population decline, dwindling sources of support from foundations and from government funds, opposition to change, and negative criticism. “We are all in this together,” the president said as he called upon those to whom the battle plan was addressed to cooperate in formulating new procedures in order to turn the college around and to “remove the disappearing ink from our inkwells and replace it with a washable, not permanent, writing fluid.”<sup>8</sup>

The president set December 1 as the deadline for formulating new goals and objectives as well as a new “package” of credit and noncredit courses, seminars, and



community projects. Such innovative offerings were needed, he felt, in order to interest foundations and government funding agents. During the summer, Dean Evans and the faculty conducted an extensive review of college standards, committee structure, and academic programs, an effort directed toward improving overall instruction and making T. W. C. more marketable.<sup>9</sup>

By the end of 1975, several calendar and curriculum changes were made. Among these was the discontinuance of the four-one-four program with a return to the traditional quarter calendar in the fall of 1976. Although the four-one-four system had been viewed as a desirable educational innovation at the time of its adoption, it had its drawbacks, as has been seen. Chief among such problems was the confusion and difficulty experienced by junior college graduates wishing to transfer to Wesleyan. The faculty also approved a new degree, bachelor of applied science, to be offered beginning in the fall of 1976. This degree was designed to attract an increasing number of working adults who were graduates of community colleges and had completed an associate degree in a vocational program. The B. A. S. degree sought to "cap off" those programs by an interweaving of liberal arts and vocational education. The addition of the B. A. S. degree played a significant role in stimulating enrollment and led to the establishment of off-campus teaching centers in Chattanooga, Cleveland, Knoxville, and Oak Ridge.<sup>10</sup>

An important goal of President Naff's "battle plan" was that of providing more service to the community and to the church. Toward that end, he directed that a questionnaire be sent to the business and industrial committee of the Athens Chamber of Commerce, to churches in the Holston Conference, to alumni, and to other area residents, the chief question posed being, "What can T. W. C. do for you?" Responses resulted in the creation of business seminars, workshops, and church conferences as well as the establishment of non-credit courses and seminars for adults. In response to suggestions from public schools, T. W. C. students became more active as tutors and classroom aides.

When Naff came to Wesleyan, the accumulated deficit for operating expenses had reached \$700,000. Only the splendid cooperation of the Athens banking institutions had enabled the college to continue operation. Concerned about the financial picture, presidents of three Athens banks requested a meeting with the board of trustees and Bishop Ellis Finger to seek assurance that the Holston Conference stood firm in support of Wesleyan. "Bishop Finger stuck his neck out," reported Naff, "and told the bankers that the Holston Conference will stand behind any legitimate debt." Following the bishop's remarks, one banker rose, put his arm around President Naff, and said, "We are going to give this man anything he needs."<sup>11</sup>

A deficit of \$205,000 for the 1975-76 school year was approved by the board of trustees. Included in the budget were funds for the establishment of a development office. Maurice Gordon was hired as a part-time development consultant to assist in securing government and foundation grants and in setting up an annual fund drive. The budget included no salary increases for faculty and staff. The president told the

executive committee, "Faculty members have been understanding, but they anticipate a ten percent increase when funds are received from the sale of the coal property." While approving the sizable deficit for 1975-76, trustees ruled that the deficit for the following year could not exceed \$100,000. In order to stay within the budget, drastic cuts were made in programs and faculty and a more vigorous student recruitment effort was implemented along with an improved development program. Programs temporarily eliminated were secretarial science, foreign language, art education, and economics.<sup>12</sup>

The operating budget received a boost from the sale of a painting entitled "An Afternoon Stroll." The painting had been purchased several years previously by art instructor Martha Hale and had been recognized as valuable by current art professor Robert Jolley. Placed in the hands of an art dealer, the painting sold for \$50,000 with the dealer receiving \$10,000.

The 1975-76 fall term began on an encouraging note. Enrollment figures showed a slight increase in both the number of returning students and of new freshmen. Although the increase was small, it was viewed as significant and helped to lift the spirits of faculty and administration.

The addition of three new intercollegiate sports, soccer, baseball, and women's basketball, was a factor in the increase in student population and provided a boost to student morale. Under the leadership of Coaches Melvin ("Bucky") Reynolds and Wayne Norfleet, all three programs proved successful.

Since returning to Wesleyan in 1965 as men's basketball coach, Dwain Farmer had coached one winning team after another and had established T. W. C. as a basketball power. The 1975-76 season was no exception. The Bulldogs, led by John Morgan, Spencer Elder, and Ray Simmons, ended the season with a 28-3 record. They were named one of the co-champions of the Volunteer State Athletic Conference and gave Farmer his 300th college basketball victory, 180 of which had been at Wesleyan. John Morgan closed his successful career by being voted Most Valuable Player in the Eastern Division of the VSAC.

At their 1976 spring meeting, trustees, accustomed to hearing negative reports, heard encouraging remarks from President Naff as he declared, "We have stopped the descent, have begun to turn around, and have a massive mountain to climb with a faith that will move mountains." However, he tempered his enthusiastic remarks by warning that future enrollment prospects were "not dramatically encouraging."<sup>13</sup>

The fall student enrollment revealed an increasing diversity in the student body. Students came from fifteen states and from seven foreign countries although the vast majority continued to come from the Appalachian region.

The 1976 Homecoming, held in November, proved to be one of the most exciting and successful ever. Alumni and community residents who had pleasant memories of the many fine productions presented on the T. W. C. stage received a treat when the alumni association presented "T. W. C. on Stage: A Nostalgic Musical Revue." This special musical performance, produced and directed by Mary Ellen Naff, included

selections from several of the spring shows of the past twenty-five years along with some original numbers by Mrs. Naff. A large number of alumni who had performed in the earlier productions returned to re-enact their former roles. The cast also included townspeople, current students, and children of alumni. Mrs. Naff conceived the idea for the production while talking to alumni who spoke of the importance the spring shows had played in their memories. This, along with the need for new curtains for the Townsend Hall stage and for other repairs, presented a particularly appropriate means of raising funds for renovation. The two evening performances were a huge success and resulted in two similar productions being held in 1977 and 1978. J. Neal Ensminger served as master of ceremonies and delighted the audience with nostalgic comments on the previous shows.<sup>14</sup>

The college lost to retirement the services of three dedicated and long-time employees in 1976: Mary Nell Jackson Graves, assistant to the president; Dr. Jack Bowling, professor of mathematics; and Dr. Herbert Neff, professor of education. Mrs. Graves had come to the campus in 1951 and had worked with four presidents during her tenure of twenty-six years. Neff, an author and an authority on teaching exceptional children, had served the college well for twelve years. Through the years, Bowling distinguished himself in several capacities, as dean of students, as professor of mathematics and chairman of the mathematics department, as faculty representative to the board of trustees, and as a member of the administrative committee which conducted the affairs of the college following the resignation of President Turner. Following his retirement, Bowling returned in the fall of 1978 on a part-time basis as director of adult and continuing education, a position he held until 1988.

For the first time in a number of years, a balanced budget was approved by the trustees for the year 1977-78. The budget was based on progress in fund raising, careful fiscal management, and some increase in student enrollment. The faculty and staff were partially responsible for the balanced budget, for they agreed to serve without salary increases. The following year saw another balanced budget which included a modest annual salary increase for each employee of \$300 or \$400 depending on whether the individual was employed on a nine or a twelve-month basis.<sup>15</sup>

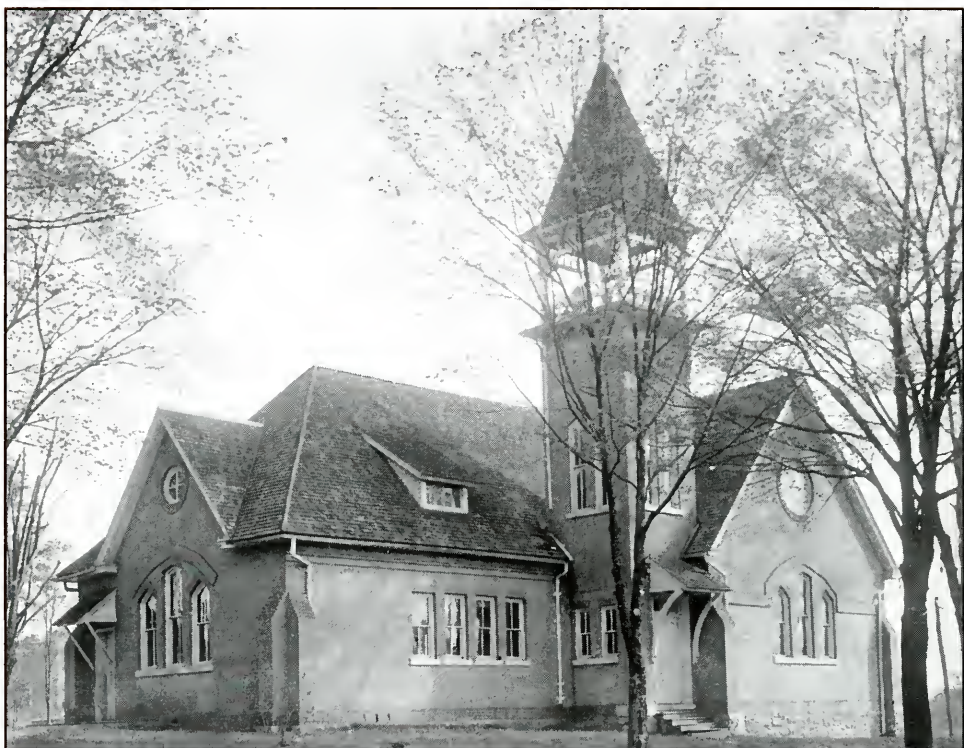
Low salaries were a major factor in faculty and staff turnover during the Naff years. In view of the high inflation rate of the 1970s, the already meager salaries became even smaller and were a constant source of frustration. The administration realized the inadequacy of salaries but was faced not only with scarcity of funds but also with a mandate, from both the trustees and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, to balance the budget and to reduce outstanding debts.

Under Naff's leadership, the college's religious life was reinforced and its relationship to the church's mission in higher education was reaffirmed. A deeply spiritual individual, Naff held strong convictions as to the place of religion on the campus. "Our mission is *Christian* higher education," he frequently said. Under Naff's tutelage, a "church-related college" became more than mere words printed in the college catalog. The president ordered that administrative offices, library, soda shop, stu-

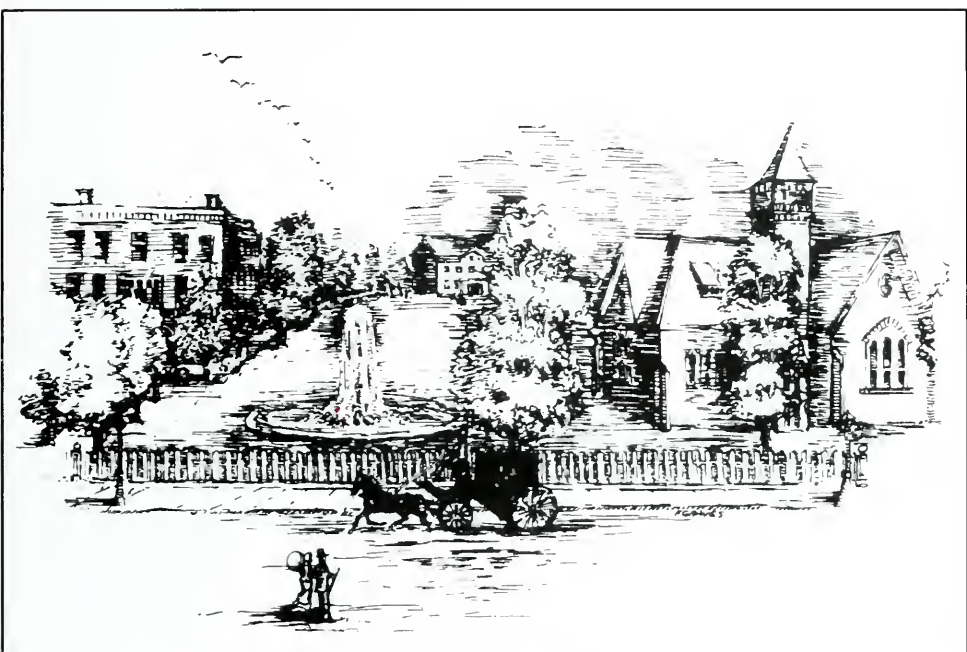


John Fletcher Spence, chief administrator from 1875 to 1893 of East Tennessee Wesleyan University, Grant Memorial University, and U.S. Grant University, was one of the college's most devoted and effective leaders.

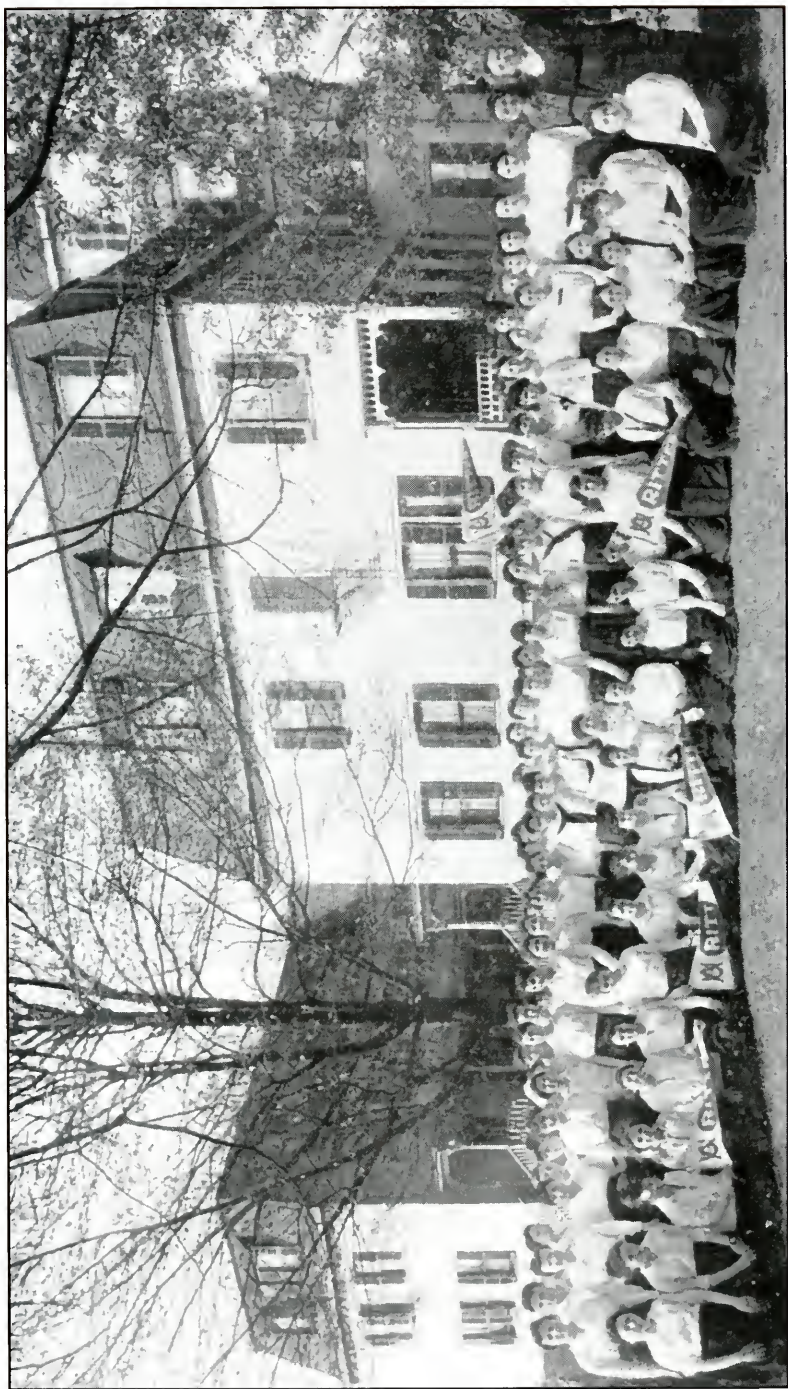




The College Chapel, built in 1882, stood on the present site of Townsend Hall.



A sketch of the campus in 1885 by Frances Graves.  
(Old College, Hatfield Hall, University Chapel)



Ritter Industrial Home residents in their distinctive uniforms (1902).





Chemistry laboratory in Banfield Hall (circa 1905).





Ritter Hall was once surrounded by a picket fence.



The class of 1910 had seven graduates: D.R. Haney, Joseph Whitney Ellis, J.S. Grahl, Orin Mitchell, Nora Childress, W.L. Hart, and Lulu Angel.



The graduating class of 1914 gave the arch at the entrance to the campus.



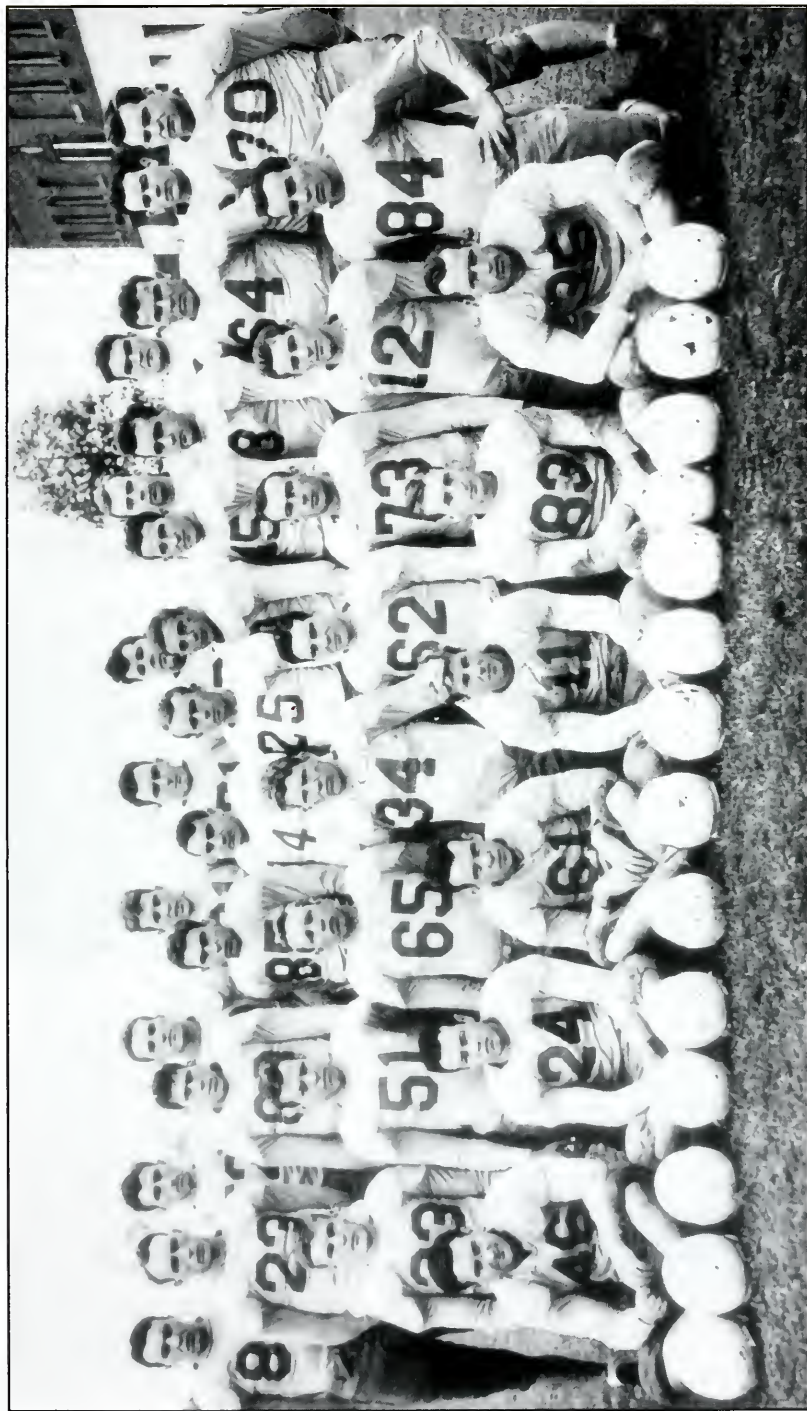


David Bolton, Class of 1872, retired in 1920 after serving as mathematics professor for forty-seven years and as trustee for five years.





Annie Merner Pfeiffer with President James L. Robb,  
Governor Prentiss Cooper, and  
Bishop Paul Kern (front row) at the dedication of the  
Merner-Pfeiffer Library in 1941.



The Tennessee Wesleyan Bulldogs won the Peach Bowl in 1946.



Louie Underwood, superintendent of buildings and grounds, with maintenance crew (1955).





The Tennessee Wesleyan Choir sang at the  
General Conference of the United Methodist Church in 1956.





Jack Houts directed the choir and popular musical productions from 1946 to 1962.



Claude Catron, football co-captain, crowns Lillian Nickle, Homecoming Queen, at the Centennial Homecoming in 1957.

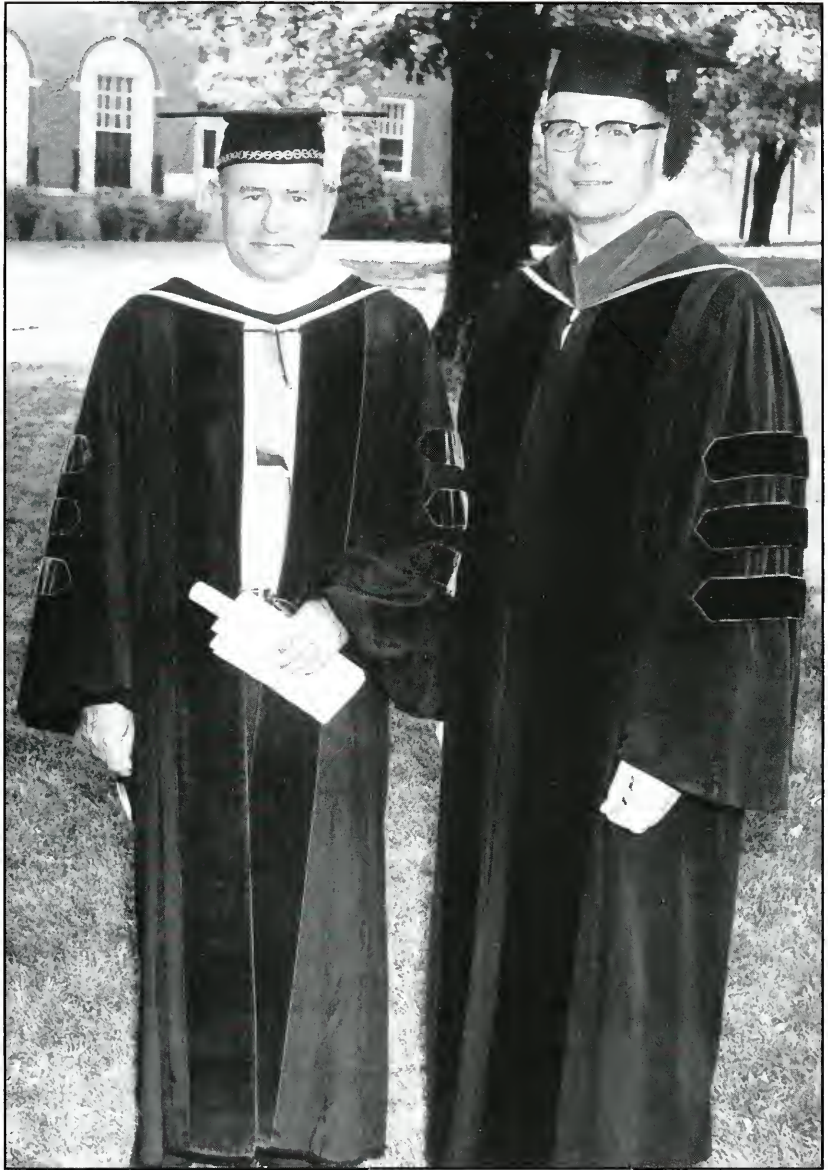


Burkett Witt, beloved dispenser of food, advice, and friendship (1961).

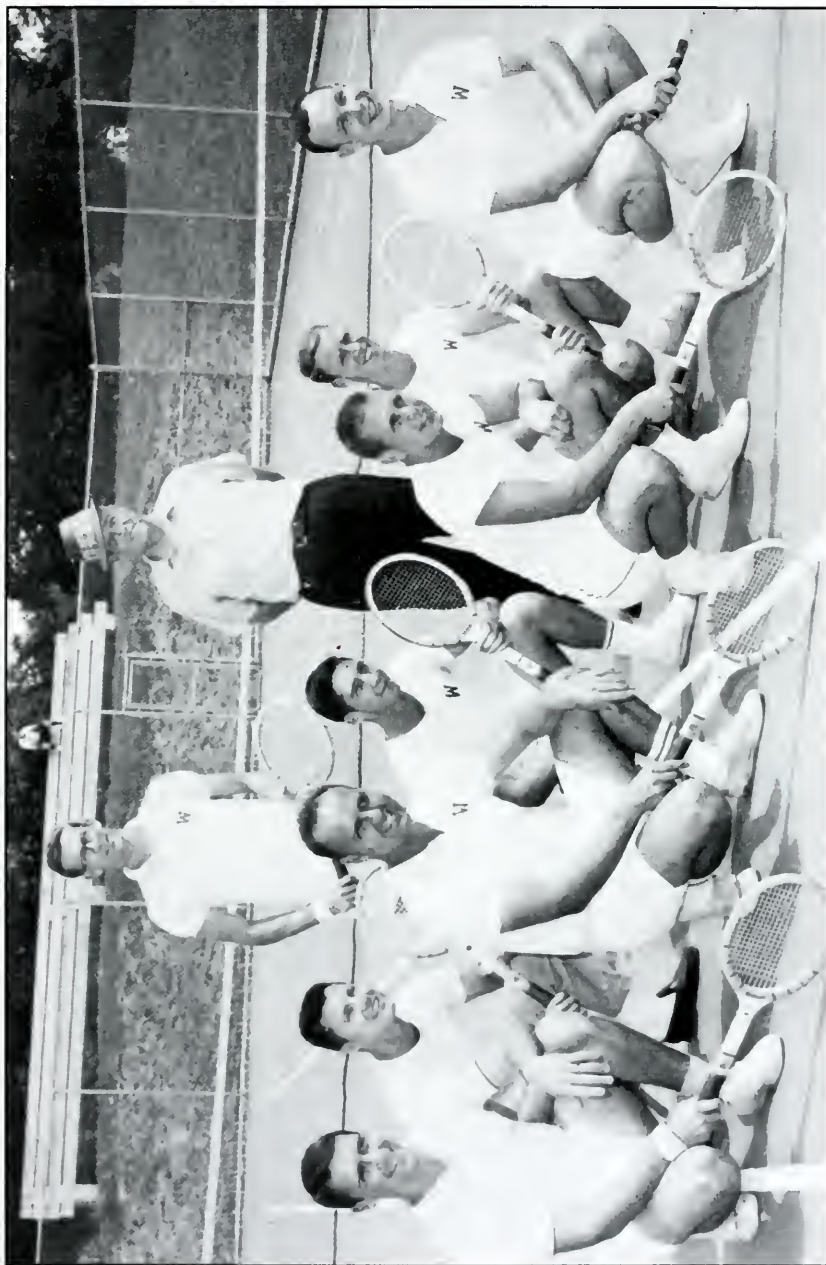


Harry Coble, popular drama professor, gave a one-man performance of *Krapp's Last Tape* in 1961.



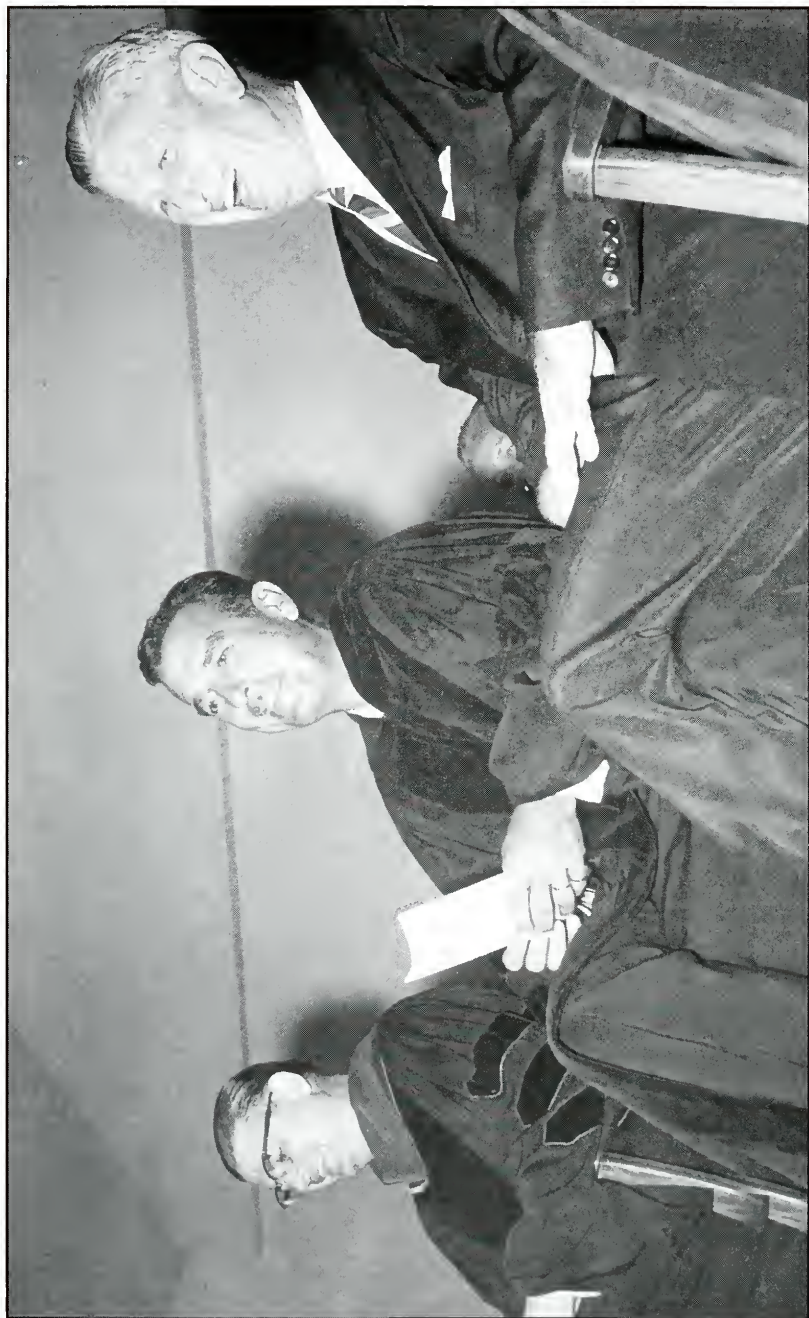


Dr. David Lockmiller with President Ralph Mohney in 1962  
when Lockmiller received an honorary degree.



Coach Van Coe with the 1963 tennis team:

Bill Johnson, Johnny Huddleston, Jackie Robinson, George Simpson, Richard Camp, Eddie Newton, Bud Ellis, and Raymond Barr.



Ernest (Tennessee Ernie) Ford with President Ralph Mohn and University of Tennessee President Andy Holt when Ford received an honorary degree in 1965.





J. Neal Ensminger, Class of 1931, presents the Distinguished Alumna Award to Alice Weihe Lockmiller in 1982.





Dr. William D. Sullins, chairman of trustees, and Dean Toombs Kay present plans for the renovation of Banfield Hall in 1968.



Bill Hutson, business administration professor,  
has his class preparation interrupted by a visitor.  
Hutson had a long tenure of thirty-six years.



Dr. George Naff, the college chaplain after World War II,  
returned as college president in 1975.

dent center, and gymnasium be closed during regularly scheduled chapel services and urged, though did not require, chapel attendance by the entire college community. The number of worship services required of students increased, and a fellowship of Christian Athletes was organized. The curriculum was revised to offer more required hours in religious, philosophical, and ethical studies.<sup>16</sup>

A major in church vocations was initiated to attract students interested in church-related careers. The program offered students four options: church school education, church music, church camp and recreational leadership, and church business management. Student groups such as the Wesleyan Fellowship and the Baptist Student Union were quite active. The introduction of a new bachelor of music education degree in the fall of 1977 attracted students and increased choir membership from sixteen to fifty-six voices.

President Naff's focus on service to the community began to pay off by 1977 when the annual fund set a record of \$75,000 given by Athens area donors. The following year brought even greater success. Under the leadership of Bill Rodgers, mayor of Athens and chairman of the local drive, the community exceeded the goal of \$100,000, the largest amount of community support for any single year in the history of the college. Mayor Rodgers was assisted by committee members Joe Frye, Andy Walker, and Bill Akins.

Progress made by the college under Naff's leadership prompted Chuck Redfern, astute observer and weekly columnist for *The Daily Post-Athenian*, to write that Wesleyan was "experiencing a revitalization of its programs and a turnaround in its operation" and that there had been "more progress made in the past six months than at any time in the past six years."<sup>17</sup>

While the college was indeed progressing in several areas, it continued to have difficulty in retaining key personnel. The resignation, in 1977, of Mike O'Brien, popular dean of students and former chaplain, was keenly felt by many students. O'Brien, who had spent six years at the college, was asked by the staff of *The New Exponent* to recall some incidents occurring during his tenure. He told of an amusing episode that happened in chapel during his time as chaplain. He had invited a distinguished theologian from a nearby university to speak. During the guest lecturer's presentation, someone turned on the fan behind the curtain in Townsend Hall, causing the curtain to flow forward and engulf the speaker. "I aged during that chapel program," said O'Brien. Then, continued O'Brien, there was the "mystery" of the bell that disappeared from the bell tower of the Merner-Pfeiffer Library one night and mysteriously reappeared quite some time later in an old house near the campus. "How that thing was taken off the roof of the library was an amazing engineering feat if you think about it," he said. "No one except the fraternity that took it will ever know!" Once the whereabouts of the bell was discovered, Louie Underwood reported, maintenance workers retrieved it and returned it to the campus where it now occupies a prominent place by the sign on College Street.<sup>18</sup>

The resignation, also in 1977, of Dr. Carl Honaker, chairman of the chemistry



department, was another severe loss for the college. Honaker had served since 1951 and was a brilliant professor who prepared students well, many of them going on to medical school or to other postgraduate study. In addition to providing wise counsel in committee and faculty meetings, Honaker worked as acting dean during the 1974-75 school year. While at T. W. C., he was instrumental in the organization of the South Central Independent College Association of Chemists. He is remembered not only for his scholarship and teaching ability but also as a talented performer in several college dramatic productions. Honaker resigned to join the staff of the Richland Oil Company in the state of Washington.

Wesleyan's strong athletic tradition was recognized in 1979 by the alumni association through the establishment of the Athletic Hall of Fame. The purpose of the Hall of Fame was to honor those who had achieved excellence in athletics at T. W. C. as well as others who had contributed to the athletic program through the investment of time and/or money. A committee consisting of Dwain Farmer, Rankin Hudson, Buddy Liner, Scott Mayfield, and M. C. ("Tip") Smith made the initial selection from alumni recommendations. The first inductees were: S. B. ("Bullet") Boyer, Miles ("Proudly") Proudfoot, Rankin Hudson, R. N. ("Rube") McCray, and Forest H. ("Whitie") Kendall. They were installed at Homecoming 1979. Induction of members into the Hall of Fame became an annual highlight of Homecoming activities.

Dean Robert Evans resigned in January 1979 to accept a similar position at Southwest College in Kansas. Dr. Bowling, accustomed to wearing many hats, became acting dean until a replacement could be secured. Dr. Albert Dimmitt, a native of Kansas with a Ph.D. from the University of Kansas, assumed the post of academic dean in July 1979. George P. Miller III became dean of student services in the fall, replacing James Cheek who assumed the position of director of admissions.

At the fall meeting of the trustees, President Naff reported that T. W. C. was "making slow but steady progress toward the realization of our mutual dream for a Dream College." Such a college, he said, "could claim spiritual, academic, and athletic achievement and financial resourcefulness" and "could even be an institution gaining deserved renown in service to God, community and nation." He continued by describing the many achievements made in emphasizing spiritual life achievements, expanding the curriculum with new majors, instituting a cooperative program with Cleveland State Community College, and increasing financial support.<sup>19</sup>

Tragedy struck the campus in 1980. The entire college community was saddened when, on January 27, three members of the women's basketball team were killed and a fourth member injured in an automobile accident. The students, who had just had dinner with other team members at a local restaurant, were returning to campus when a drunken driver smashed into their car. Dead at the scene were Cathy Delaney, 18, a freshman from Loudon, Tennessee; Beverly Beasley, 19, a sophomore from Danielsville, Georgia; and Andrea Higdon, 18, a freshman from Ducktown, Tennessee. Injured was Kimberly Hamilton, 19, of Tellico Plains, Tennessee. A memorial service was held in the sanctuary of Trinity United Methodist Church with President

Naff and Chaplain Chris Wilson as speakers. The campus mourned again when, two months later, David Wayne Dimmitt, fifteen-year-old son of Dean and Mrs. Dimmitt, also was killed in an automobile accident.

By 1980, enrollment had reached slightly over 500 in head count and 460 in FTE (full-time equated). The increase resulted from added emphasis to recruitment, the initiation of an adult evening and extension program, and additions to the intercollegiate sports program. However, beginning in 1981 and for the next few years, enrollment began another decline. Although the head count remained at 500 in 1981, the FTE fell to 436.

While enrollment remained a problem in the early 1980s, the college showed significant progress in other areas. A balanced budget was achieved which enabled Wesleyan to operate in the black for three consecutive years, and there was a reduction in indebtedness. Moreover, alumni giving was up fifty percent with a twenty-one percent increase in the number of alumni donors. Total gifts from alumni, friends, business and industry, foundations, and the Holston Conference reached \$721,000, the highest total yet recorded. New programs were initiated in computer technology and church vocational training, and there was a substantial increase in number of faculty.

A portion of the gifts received came in the form of a \$100,000 memorial to the late Humphries Reaves, a businessman and civic leader of Greeneville, Tennessee who was an 1875 graduate. As a student, Reaves had achieved one of the highest scholastic records in the college's history up to that date. This unrestricted gift came at an opportune time since the interest was used to improve faculty salaries.<sup>20</sup>

Maggie Ensminger, a cherished member of the library staff and of the campus community, retired in 1981 after twenty years as the library's reference and circulation assistant. Maggie Beavers had come to T. W. C. as a student from Epworth, Georgia, in 1933 and had married fellow-graduate Neal Ensminger in 1937. Far more than a library worker to students and faculty, Mrs. Ensminger was their friend, confidante, and counselor. Even after her retirement, she returned to the library periodically to help when needed.

During the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee, Wesleyan was chosen to participate in a program affiliated with the Tennessee Valley Authority. Each Saturday during the World's Fair, Dr. John Woods, biology professor and water sports enthusiast, led a group of students in the presentation of lectures and live demonstrations of kayaking and sailboating. Demonstrations were held at TVA's "Adventure Theater" floating exhibit. Students participating included Jimmy Woods, Thomas Layman, Evan Woods, Andrew Hunter, Victor Whiting, Rex Morrison, Willie Harms, Sue Springer, David Corum, Steve Dodgeson, Kris Cook, and Mary Ann McLendon.

In 1982, new life was brought to Old College, which had stood vacant for some time and was in need of maintenance. The building, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, became the site of the McMinn Living Heritage Museum, which had been established through the leadership of Muriel Shadow Mayfield.

Tennessee Wesleyan leased the building to the museum association free of charge under an agreement by which the association would maintain the interior with the college remaining responsible for the exterior and grounds.

President and Mrs. Naff visited Nagasaki Wesleyan College in Japan, at the invitation of its president, to join in a celebration of the institution's one-hundredth anniversary. Nagasaki Wesleyan had been established by a Tennessee Wesleyan graduate, the Reverend Carroll Long, to train Christian leaders. A student exchange program between the two "sister" institutions was initiated and made possible through partial funding by Dr. Carroll Long of Johnson City, a descendant of the Reverend Long.<sup>21</sup>

Commencement exercises in 1982 saw the return of the time-honored baccalaureate service which had been discontinued in 1968. J. Monroe Ball, former pastor of Keith United Methodist Church and senior minister of First United Methodist Church, Morristown, delivered the sermon. On the following day, Nell Webb Mohneney, speaker, author, newspaper columnist and Wesleyan's former first lady, gave the commencement address to one hundred graduates. Honorary doctorates were presented to the Reverend J. Monroe Ball; H. Maynard ("Brody") Ellis, civic leader and insurance executive; and A. B. Goddard, a Maryville attorney.<sup>22</sup>

Following the celebration of his sixty-fifth birthday, President Naff began to think of retirement. He had worked tirelessly since 1975 and was ready to turn over the heavy burdens of administration to someone "younger." In January 1982, he informed the executive committee of the trustees that, after the meeting of the Holston Annual Conference in June, he would be in consultation with the proper authorities about when to announce his retirement date. His time as president, he said, was "still an exciting one for Mrs. Naff and me, but we do not wish to outstay our welcome."<sup>23</sup>

The following January, Naff informed the faculty of his plan to retire at the end of the 1983-84 school year. Citing his age and the need for change as reasons for the decision, he said, "I'm sixty-six now. I think a college needs a change every six to eight years, as a general rule. And I think a younger person would be desirable." That the institution was still struggling to secure adequate financial resources and was facing a decline in enrollment doubtless played a part in Naff's decision that a younger leader was needed.<sup>24</sup>

As his last year began, Naff announced the launching of a major financial campaign called "Assure the Future" to raise \$2,225,000 toward meeting operational, endowment, and capital needs.

Enrollment, which had shown some improvement, was down again in the fall of 1983 and dropped still farther in the spring of 1984. Declining enrollment and the accompanying financial shortfall resulted in the discontinuance of all new scholarships for baseball, soccer, and tennis. Commitments made to current athletes were honored through their remaining years as students. Basketball scholarships continued to be offered but "with a look toward the future at the possibility of (basketball's) being a non-scholarship program."<sup>25</sup>

The elimination of scholarships for three sports and the future uncertainty of basketball scholarships was a major disappointment to the coaching staff and viewed as seriously hampering the athletic program. Jerry Blevins, baseball coach, said that he was not sure of the impact but "it won't help. All it can do is make our program less competitive." Veteran basketball coach Dwain Farmer was disappointed but refused to comment on the change in policy.<sup>26</sup>

The administration's decision partially to eliminate athletic scholarships prompted Richard Edwards of *The Daily Post-Athenian* to call on college officials to "take another look at scholarships." Edwards pointed out that Wesleyan had not only produced several professional athletes, but the quality of competition, he said, would surprise many people who had never bothered to watch a T. W. C. basketball or baseball game. "It is a misconception that every athlete at T. W. C. is receiving a full scholarship. Actually, only a little more than three full scholarships are available for baseball and the money is divided among twenty players. The men's basketball team has only 7 1/2 scholarships and the women's 2 2/3," Edwards wrote.<sup>27</sup>

Rather ironically, during the time that Wesleyan was experiencing difficulty in balancing its budget and recruiting students, its sports program was achieving wide acclaim. Under coaches Dwain Farmer, Wayne Norfleet, Melvin ("Bucky") Reynolds, Brenda Paul, Lynn Jarrett, Stan Harrison, and Jerry Blevins, the T. W. C. teams were feared competitors. These coaches produced some of the best players in Tennessee Wesleyan's history.

Tom Browning, an outstanding baseball player, was drafted by the Cincinnati Reds in 1982. As a senior, Browning, a pitcher, compiled an 8-4 record for the Bulldogs during the 1982 season with victories over the University of Tennessee, University of Kentucky, and David Lipscomb University. One of Browning's teammates, outfielder Michael Jordan, was named N.A.A. All-American after hitting .493. He set a school record in 1982 with 18 home runs and 89 RBIs during the 44-game season.

The sudden death of William J. Gribben, communications instructor, came as a shock to the college in April 1984. Gribben was undergoing chemotherapy in a Chattanooga hospital when he died in his sleep from an apparent heart attack. He was a former NBC news editor and news reporter for the network's "Today Show." A tribute to Gribben appeared in the 1984 *Nocatula*, describing him as an "irreplaceable teacher." In coming to Tennessee Wesleyan, Gribben had fulfilled a long-time dream of teaching in a small college. During a short span of only three years, he had become, according to the *Nocatula*, "an outstanding and caring teacher who never ceased to amaze and inspire students with this knowledge and enthusiasm."<sup>28</sup>

The 1983-84 yearbook was dedicated to George and Mary Ellen Naff, two people who, according to *Nocatula* writers, had contributed greatly to "molding Tennessee Wesleyan College into what it is today." Following his retirement, President Naff continued his close association with the college, serving on a part-time basis as campus minister, teaching religion and philosophy, and working with the off-campus program.

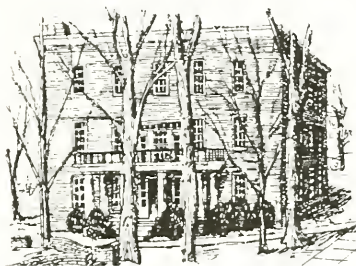


Joining President Naff in retirement was Dr. Heisse Johnson, former academic dean of Wesleyan, who had served for twenty-seven years as Director of Christian Higher Education in the Holston Conference. Johnson himself had become something of an institution in the field of education and in the ranks of Methodism and was known nationally and internationally as a renowned Biblical scholar. He had elevated the financial support of the Holston Conference to its colleges to \$1,000,000, a feat which put Holston in a select group of United Methodist conferences. Dr. Johnson, at the last meeting of the Holston colleges' Board of Governors before Naff's retirement, spoke in praise of the outgoing president for turning Tennessee Wesleyan around "academically, spiritually, and financially."<sup>29</sup>

George Naff had taken the reins of leadership at a time when the college was struggling with myriad problems and when many had lost faith in it. Although strained finances and declining student enrollment still plagued the institution at the time of his retirement, it can be said that Naff's presidency brought stability, turned the college in a positive direction, and restored its historic position in the Holston Conference as a respected church-related college.

## CHAPTER 13

### DREAMS AND DIFFICULTIES: 1984-1993



“O ye of fearful hearts, be strong!  
Your downcast eyes and hands lift up!  
Ye shall not be forgotten long;  
Hope to the end, in Jesus hope!”

*- Charles Wesley*

James E. Cheek became the sixteenth president of Tennessee Wesleyan in January 1984 after a review of applicants lasting almost a year. In accepting the presidency, Cheek told trustees that he was a “dreamer” with “big dreams” for Wesleyan and that he wanted to “put legs on those dreams.” He pledged to work hard, asked for prayers, and sounded an optimistic theme that he would repeat often during his presidency: “T. W. C. is not only going to survive, but it will thrive.”<sup>1</sup>

An impressive presidential inauguration was held in October and attended by representatives from fifty colleges and universities as well as by students, faculty, trustees, and townspeople. Participating in the ceremony were three former presidents, Ralph Mohney, Charles Turner, and George Naff, who were joined by Hix Boudurant, chair of Holston Conference Colleges Board of Trustees; Jackson Kramer, chair T. W. C. Board of Governors; and Bishop R. Etsler. The inaugural address was given by Dr. G. Douglas Lewis, president of Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D. C. and former T. W. C. chaplain.

James Cheek certainly was no stranger to Tennessee Wesleyan. His firsthand knowledge of the college’s operation and of its strengths and weaknesses probably exceeded that of any of his predecessors. Such knowledge had been gained during his series of experiences as faculty member, chairman of the English department, dean of student services, director of admission, assistant to the president, and vice-president for institutional advancement. Before coming to Wesleyan, he was a faculty member and baseball coach at Hiwassee College. A native of Chattanooga, he held a bachelor’s degree from Emory and Henry and a master’s degree from the University of Chattanooga; he had also completed course work for a doctorate from Florida State. While serving as T. W. C.’s president, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by Lincoln Memorial University. A certified church lay speaker, he was a member of Keith Memorial United Methodist Church where he taught in the Sunday School and

served as chairman of the Council of Ministries. He and his wife, Rosemary, had four children, James III ("Trip"), Caroline, Christopher, and Rachel.

In his first report to the trustees at their fall meeting, Cheek expressed great concern over declining enrollment, describing the situation as "devastating" and quoting Thomas Paine's "These are the times that try men's souls." Compared to the previous fall, the student body was sixty-one fewer in number. The situation was made even worse, he said, in that the budget was based on a projected increase of thirty-eight which meant that, in terms of the budget, the shortfall was ninety-nine students. The president asked the trustees to be patient and indicated that changes in the personnel of the admissions department were expected to bring quick improvement.<sup>2</sup>

Cheek's presidency brought both new employees and changes in responsibilities for some of the existing staff. The Reverend Gordon Sterchi, former pastor of Keith Memorial United Methodist Church, joined the staff as vice-president for development. A popular and respected church leader, Sterchi became a valuable liaison between the college and ministers of the Holston Conference. The appointment of James Harrison, an alumnus, as director of student recruitment brought stability to the admissions office that, for several years, had been hampered in its efforts by frequent changes in leadership. Robbie J. Ensminger continued in the president's office as executive assistant to the president and director of alumni affairs. Academic Dean Albert Dimmitt having resigned, his position was eventually filled by the appointment of Dr. Barry Chambers. Chambers, a native of England, had been a visiting professor at the University of Chattanooga while Cheek was a graduate student there. Before his appointment, both Professor James Thompson and Dr. Jack Bowling temporarily performed duties of the academic dean.

Since the early 1970s, enrollment had resembled a roller coaster. Down dramatically in the early part of the decade, it had risen slightly only to plummet again in the early 1980s. Future prospects were not encouraging since national projections indicated that fewer students would be enrolling in college as the number of citizens aged 18-22 declined. Nevertheless, President Cheek assured trustees that Wesleyan would gain in enrollment and set a goal of a 650-member student body to be reached by 1990.<sup>3</sup>

While the population of young people of the traditional college age was decreasing, the number of older adults seeking education was increasing. Under the leadership of President Naff, the college sought to attract such potential students through the creation of the bachelor of applied science degree. Although more emphasis continued to be placed on recruitment of non-traditional students, many felt that Wesleyan had not been fully committed to the provision of resources and recruitment efforts needed to reach older adults. It continued to lag behind other institutions, both state and private, in this respect.

President Cheek believed that more students could be attracted by increased attention to athletics. The college already had a successful sports program, particularly excelling in basketball, baseball, and soccer. On occasion, teams even went outside

their own smaller conference to tackle Southeastern Conference opponents such as the University of Tennessee. In 1984, Coach Farmer and his Bulldogs took on the Ole Miss Rebels and, although defeated 77-59, made a good showing. In addition to success in men's basketball, T. W. C. had developed a powerhouse in women's basketball, coached by Stan Harrison. Harrison had joined the staff in 1982 as both coach and dean of student services and had led the Lady Bulldogs to a series of victories. With a view to attracting more student athletes, the college added, in 1985, the non-scholarship sports of women's softball, men's golf, and cross-country for both men and women. The latter achieved little success and was short-lived.

Football was yet another sport enthusiastically recommended by Cheek as a means of recruitment. During the 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s, Wesleyan had fielded a successful team, which attracted players from beyond the local area. Largely due to its cost, football was dropped after the 1957 season. The president now proposed the return of the sport after its absence for twenty-eight years. Talking to presidents of other small colleges with viable non-scholarship football programs had convinced him that such a venture would increase enrollment. He persuaded the trustees to conduct a feasibility study which led to their approval, in January 1985, of non-scholarship football. The athletic budget was increased by \$75,000 with plans to field a team in the fall although no coach had been employed, no players recruited, and no field of regulation size was available on campus. Despite these handicaps and lateness in scheduling games, Athletic Director Farmer managed to put together an eight-game schedule for the 1985 season. The program was launched hastily and was questioned by some members of the faculty, staff, and trustees, but the president was eager to address speedily the enrollment problem.

According to the president, a T. W. C. football coach must be "someone willing to work hard for little money...and who is interested in the concept of non-scholarship football." After several applications were reviewed, Ken Henry, an alumnus, was employed. Henry had coaching experience at Sweetwater High School and at Bearden High School in Knoxville. In his new position, he recruited nearly seventy players, and, after only three weeks of practice, the fledgling team launched the new program before a large and enthusiastic home crowd. After they were trounced in the opening game with Emory and Henry by a score of 62-12, one observer, either optimist or cynic, remarked, "Emory and Henry scored the points, but T. W. C. won the cheers." Even though the Bulldogs won only two of their eight games, President Cheek declared the first year "a good season" in view of the circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

In one of their two winning games, the Bulldogs defeated Gallaudet University, a college for the deaf located in Washington, D. C. One faculty member wryly suggested that a school for the blind be considered as an opponent for the next season. Since such a team would be unable to see the ball, T. W. C. might possibly, but not certainly, achieve another victory.

In spite of its being the butt of sarcastic remarks, the new football program did produce some positive effects. Most importantly, enrollment reached almost 500 in



the fall of 1985. Also, more students remained on campus during weekends, and their attendance at the games provided a social and recreational opportunity. Such an outlet for youthful energy was welcomed, for fraternity and sorority activities no longer flourished. This situation was due largely to the decline in enrollment but also reflected a nationwide lessening of the popularity of Greek-letter societies. In fact, at T. W. C. only Sigma Kappa sorority managed to retain its national affiliation.

The positive aspects of the football program were, however, coupled with negative factors. Some team members were interested only in the sport and lacked interest in academics. As a result, some left school even before the football season ended. Of the sixty-two who began the school year, forty-nine stayed through the season, but some of that number did not return after December. This lack of stability continued to plague the program. It must be noted, however, that several of the football recruits were good students and remained in school to achieve academic success.

Football games were not the only excitement of the fall of 1985. For a short time, all other events were overshadowed by a visit to Athens by President Ronald Reagan. A huge crowd gathered near the McMinn County Courthouse where the president spoke from the portico to his enthusiastic audience, all of whom momentarily dismissed all political divisions to join in the excitement. The town and the college enjoyed their moment of national publicity. Dr. Gordon Sterchi acted as T. W. C.'s liaison with the press. Assisted by Glenn Lowe, food services manager, Sterchi made Sherman Hall available as a communications center for the throng of national and local journalists, and the building became the backdrop for a number of newspaper photographs and television clips.

Homecoming 1985 was another exciting occasion. Among the events was the first induction of a woman athlete into the Hall of Fame. Winning this distinction was Grace Coates Keith, a 1959 graduate and basketball standout who for two years had coached the Lady Mocs of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Another popular Hall of Fame inductee in 1985 was Dwain Farmer who was recognized for both his skills as a basketball player for Wesleyan and for his subsequent career as a coach. A few days after the homecoming event, Farmer received another accolade when he was elected to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Hall of Fame with his induction to take place in Kansas City. Shortly before this induction, Farmer achieved his 503rd victory in a college basketball game and shortly thereafter announced his retirement to be effective at the end of the 1985-86 school year.<sup>5</sup>

Replacing Farmer as basketball coach was Donald Dodgen, a former star player for Farmer's team who had been basketball coach for McMinn County High School. Wayne Norfleet, who previously had left Wesleyan to coach at Cleveland State, returned to act as the college's athletic director. Norfleet's wife, Lydia, also joined the Wesleyan staff as registrar, a position she filled remarkably well until she was appointed to a similar position at Vanderbilt University.

Financial problems continued, but 1985 brought two encouraging developments.

The fund drive launched by President Naff reached its goal fourteen months ahead of schedule. Kenneth Higgins chaired this successful campaign assisted by Joe Frye, W. D. Sullins, Sam McConnell, Heisse Johnson, Jackson Kramer, and Carl Bennett. Also, a Faculty Incentive Endowment Fund was initiated by the Bowater Southern Paper Company. Income from the fund was to give monetary recognition to professors making exceptional contributions to education through their superior teaching. Bowater President W. C. Grater emphasized that the fund was not designed to be limited to contributions from Bowater but was initiated with the hope that "the gift would challenge other industries to add to the corpus to become a significant factor in faculty compensation at T. W. C."<sup>6</sup>

The year 1986 saw the college joining in the celebration of Tennessee Homecoming '86, a year-long observance decreed by Governor Lamar Alexander to encourage the people of Tennessee to honor their heritage. As part of T. W. C.'s observance, the musical drama *The Legend of Nocatula*, first performed in 1957, was revived with two public performances. Dr. Mary Greenhoe, composer with Jack Houts of the musical score, assisted with the production as did Harry Coble, author of the script, who returned to the campus from retirement for this special occasion. For the college, the final event of Tennessee Homecoming '86 was the burying of a time capsule on the campus near the site of the legendary oak and hackberry trees. Some 115 organizations and individuals contributed items related to the lifestyle of the college and community. The capsule containing these items was to be opened in 2086.<sup>7</sup>

The enrollment picture improved slightly in 1986 with a student body of 547 representing an eight percent increase over the previous year. Also encouraging was the fact that the average ACT scores of entering freshmen improved by two percent. In an effort to recruit more students from United Methodist churches, each church in the conference was offered a scholarship that could be awarded to one of its members. The number of students coming from United Methodist churches had been showing a noticeable decline.

Faculty members were anxious that the emphasis on recruitment not lead to the relaxation of academic standards. Passing the English Proficiency Examination, required for graduation, presented a major challenge to many students. To fulfill this requirement, a student must prove competency in written communication by composing an essay of about 500 words with acceptable content and organization and with the absence of major grammatical errors. The English department provided a writing laboratory for those needing remedial instruction. A favorite story of the English professor supervising the laboratory had to do with a student who exhibited orally his need for such instruction. A student appeared in the lab who had not yet taken the proficiency exam but had been sent by another English teacher who felt that he needed more practice in writing. As the supervising professor was looking for a record of the new student's standing in regard to the proficiency exam, another student solemnly explained, "He ain't never took it yet." The ability to make three grammatical errors while uttering only six words exhibited both the speaker's need for

instruction and the enormity of the task facing the English department! The same professor recalls the pessimistic remark of another student who had been attending the lab for quite some time with only slight improvement. Pointing out the window to the site of the time capsule's burial, the student predicted, "When they dig up that thing out there, I'll still be settin' here in this writin' lab."

A major change in the school calendar was made in the fall of 1988 with the conversion from a quarter to a semester system, which provided for a fall and spring semester of fifteen weeks each. Such a change was in accord with the calendar used by most educational institutions and simplified transfer procedures. Another advantage, Dean Chambers noted, was that the longer term gave students time "to come to a better understanding of the subject matter."<sup>8</sup>

Several additions and improvements to buildings and grounds occurred during Cheek's presidency. Changes in the football field, in 1986, brought it into conformity with the standards of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. The field was lengthened by inclusion of the former site of tennis courts, bleachers were increased to give a seating capacity of 2,000, and new goal posts and a new scoreboard were added. During halftime activities at the T. W. C. —Georgia Southwestern game in November 1986, the field was officially named in honor of Rankin Hudson, a former player and coach.

Renovation of the Merner-Pfeiffer Library in 1986-87 was made possible by a grant from the Mabel Pew Mysin Trust. The project included the addition of a third level of stacks, shelving for over 100,000 volumes, an elevator, central heat and air, carpeting, computer lab equipment, and a microfilm collection. At a 1987 rededication ceremony, two rooms were designated the Myers Reading Room and the Harms Reference Room, honoring Claryse Myers and Louise Harms, librarians who had given distinguished service.<sup>9</sup>)

A new baseball field on Kinser Hill became ready for play in 1988. One of the athletic department's fundraising efforts was a baseball card show attended by Tom Browning, pitcher for the Cincinnati Reds and former T. W. C. baseball star. Also in 1988, the Student Government Association attempted to restore the arches, campus landmarks the absence of which was still mourned by alumni. However, the S. G. A.'s budget could not meet the expense, and the project was postponed.

The women's dormitory known as New Hall was named Keith Hall in honor of the late Catherine Keith who had left a substantial bequest to the college. Another dormitory, Lawrence Hall, was renovated to house the administrative offices formerly located on the lower level of Townsend Hall. Lawrence, one of the most attractive of the campus buildings, had been unoccupied for twelve years and used only for storage. Cleaning out the accumulation of stored items was a major task, which was completed largely through the efforts of Dr. W. David Lewis and his crew of church volunteers. Lewis, a Sevierville minister, was a member of the trustees' Committee on Buildings and Grounds. Renovation of Lawrence Hall's interior was financed primarily through memorial and honorary gifts by which a donor could have a room

named in honor of a designated honoree.

After administrative offices were moved to Lawrence, the vacated area in Townsend became a student center with a bookstore, a post office, and offices for the Student Government Association, for school publications, and for career planning and placement services. The student center was financed by Kenneth and Dana Higgins who requested that a conference room in the area be named for Christopher Cheek, son of the president, who was an enthusiastic supporter of college activities. Mr. and Mrs. Higgins were among the most generous of college supporters. In recognition of their many contributions, a program for selected students was named the Higgins Honors Program in Leadership Development. This addition to the curriculum allowed outstanding students to study leadership from a liberal arts perspective.<sup>10</sup>

When the new student center in Townsend was completed, the area in Sherman occupied by the bookstore and post office became part of a dining room available for both campus and community use. Another improvement came with the addition of 170 trees, 75 of which were Bradford pear trees, that were planted along Green and North Jackson streets, providing an attractive approach to the main campus.

The number of campus additions and renovations might seem to indicate a prosperous financial condition. Such was not the case. In 1987, receipts from donors to the annual fund were down by about \$75,000, and a gift of \$20,000 which had been pledged did not materialize. Expenditures made on the basis of this anticipated donation increased the deficit. "We cannot continue to run deficits," President Cheek declared, "but neither can we die on the vine and lose ground."<sup>11</sup>

An income problem facing the institution since its founding was the small endowment which produced only about three percent of the annual income. In an attempt to deal with the financial shortfall, the administration sought the aid of a local accounting firm to establish a budget and cash flow that would meet immediate needs.<sup>12</sup>

President Cheek challenged trustees to assist him and Dr. George Miller, recently employed as development official, in raising funds. He urged each trustee to be responsible for adding \$4,000 to college funds by the end of the fiscal year. This might be accomplished by a personal contribution, by solicitation, or by both methods. The president insisted that the condition of the college remained positive, saying that it was moving closer "to becoming the kind of college we want to have."<sup>13</sup>

Given the paucity of funds in the 1980s, the news, in 1989, of a major bequest came as a godsend. Harriett Reaves Neff of Greenville, Tennessee, died at age 88 and left to the college a sum in excess of 2.25 million dollars. Mrs. Neff's father was a Wesleyan graduate and her late husband, a state senator for Virginia, served on the Holston Conference Colleges Board of Governors. Emory and Henry and Hiwassee also received bequests from the Neff estate.

Trustees earmarked most of the bequest for the college's highest priority, debt retirement on three major buildings, Centennial, Fowler, and Sherman. Some funds



were designated for scholarships and for endowment, and one million dollars was set aside to be used as an emergency fund by which the college, when a special need arose, could borrow from itself rather than seeking an outside lender and paying interest.<sup>14</sup>

President Cheek called the Neff bequest “a landmark event in the history of the college” and “a prime example of the significant impact one person can have on the life of an institution.” Debts on three buildings having been cancelled, a note-burning celebration was held in June 1, 1991. Former presidents Ralph Mohny and George Naff were among the one hundred invited guests, and Bishop Clay F. Lee, Jr. officiated at the ceremony. A reception followed in Old College, now available as an attractive meeting place since the museum had moved to a larger venue.<sup>15</sup>

Faculty salaries remained low in spite of financial improvement in other areas. Nevertheless, the college continued to maintain an exceptional faculty. Some recognition of the importance of superior teaching came in 1988 with the establishment of the Lockmiller Teacher of the Year Award. Endowed by Dr. David Lockmiller and Dorothy Lockmiller Bright Thompson, the award promoted effective teaching in a Christian atmosphere. Dr. Edmond Cox of the biology department was the first recipient followed in subsequent years by Tom Oneal (1989), Sam Roberts (1990), David Duncan (1991), and David Duncan (1992).

In 1988, Dr. Durwood Dunn of the history department received the Thomas Wolfe Memorial Award, sponsored by the Western Carolina Historical Association, for his authorship of a book on Cade’s Cove. In the same year, Dr. David Duncan, also of the history department, was awarded the James Still Award for Exceptional Teaching in the Humanities, presented by the Appalachian Program of the University of Kentucky. Dr. Martha Maddox of the business department was invited to give the keynote speech at the International Conference for Communication at its meeting in Honolulu in 1991.

Dr. Jack Bowling was elected to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Hall of Fame, joining Dwain Farmer in this distinction. Bowling was recognized for his meritorious leadership in promoting athletic achievement. “It is quite an honor,” said Wayne Norfleet, Wesleyan’s athletic director, “to have two such distinguished members of the NAIA Hall of Fame.”<sup>16</sup>

A faculty development program made possible by a grant from the Pew Memorial Trust had a significant impact on the faculty’s contribution to scholarship. The program, administered by the Faculty Development Committee, offered funds for sabbatical leaves, research, and travel. As a result, faculty publications increased substantially, and the number of academic papers presented at professional meetings grew. The Pew Grant enabled Dr. Genevieve Wiggins to spend two months in Canada in preparation for authorship of a critical biography of L.M. Montgomery published as part of the Twayne World Authors Series.

At a meeting of the trustees in 1987, President Cheek spoke glowingly of faculty accomplishments, saying, “We have two Fulbright Scholars, and two have received

Still Fellowships for summer study at the University of Kentucky.”<sup>17</sup>

Librarian Louise Harms retired in 1987 after twenty-three years of notable service. Sandra Clariday, a member of the library staff since 1983, became director of the library.

Another important member of the college community, Alton Smith, also retired in 1988. Smith had a long tenure in the mathematics department and was especially proficient as a student advisor. Characterized by both a quick temper and a kind heart, Smith was described by students as “tough but fair.” Smith’s wife, Mildred, a long-time member of the staff, also retired as registrar.

Four professors whose combined service totaled well over one-hundred years retired in 1991. These were: Dr. Jack Bowling of the mathematics department, who joined the staff in 1959 and retired from full-time service in 1976; Dr. Mary Greenhoe who joined the music faculty in 1954; Courtney Senn, mathematics professor since 1963; and Dr. Genevieve Wiggins, English professor since 1961.

Efforts by the college to achieve improved enrollment and financial stability while maintaining high academic standards led, in 1991, to its reaccreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The University Senate of the United Methodist Church also reaffirmed the college’s relationship to the church.

The college community mourned the sudden death of Dwain Farmer from a heart attack in January 1992 at age 59. After leaving his post at Wesleyan, Farmer continued his winning ways as basketball coach at Madisonville High School, pushing his total victories to over six hundred, which placed him among the top ten of all-time most successful coaches. As a coach and teacher, Farmer had a lasting influence on countless students. Not only did he teach athletic skills and strategy, but he imbued his students with the basic values of honesty, integrity, hard work, and good sportsmanship. As a tribute to an outstanding coach, teacher, and role model, the Coach Dwain Farmer Golf Tournament was established in 1992 and became a regular part of fall homecoming activities.<sup>18</sup>

While progress was being made in campus improvement and faculty scholarship, students, of course, remained the college’s most important component. Enrollment showed greater diversity during this period with more international students, more minority students, and more non-traditional students, i.e. those over age 22. In particular, evening classes and classes at off-campus sites brought in a significant number of older adults. Off-campus locations included Chattanooga, Cleveland, Knoxville, and Oak Ridge. By the early 1990s, the number of non-traditional students represented forty percent of the student body. Since the evening program was cost effective, it had a positive effect on the budget.

Growing diversity in the student body was reflected by the appearance of two new student organizations in 1992. The Afro-American Union brought to the campus speakers and entertainment which emphasized black history and black culture. Members of the International Club shared their cultures with the college and with the community, and their annual International Dinner introduced their American coun-

terparts to foods of their respective countries.

Sororities and fraternities no longer dominated student activities, but Stan Harrison, dean of student services, and his staff provided many opportunities for student participation in cookouts, dorm parties, musical entertainment, sightseeing trips, and other events. The Fowler and Staley lectures brought notable speakers to the campus and furnished instruction, religious guidance, and entertainment. The drama department was active, and plays directed by Professor Lynn Whiting added much to campus life, as did the choir under direction of Professor Darnell Chance. Chance also directed the popular "Consolidation," a smaller choral group. Recitals by students and faculty of the music department, chaired by Dr. Janice Ryberg, furnished further musical entertainment.

One of the most popular campus events was Litfest, the brainchild of Dr. Jeffrey Folks and Dr. Genevieve Wiggins of the English department. Each semester students in English classes wrote and performed in original skits which humorously parodied literature studied in classes. Since a large percentage of the student body was enrolled in some English class, there was wide and enthusiastic participation. English teachers, and even President Cheek, cast off any semblance of classroom dignity to perform in the skits to the vast delight of students.

Student representatives to the board of trustees brought student concerns to the attention of that group. For example, in 1988, Roger Higgins reported that students were pleased with faculty performance and with individual attention received in the classroom but saw the need for improvement of buildings and grounds, for repairs to the infirmary, and for increases in faculty salaries in order to retain good teachers.<sup>19</sup>

A student questionnaire was distributed as part of the self-study made by the college in preparation for the review by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Results from 249 responses indicated that 84% of students were satisfied with their college experience. Slightly over 50% thought parking was inadequate, for by this time, many students owned automobiles and some even drove from their dorms to the dining hall, a distance of two or three blocks! While 93% were pleased with the size of their classes, 56% were dissatisfied with food services, a perennial student complaint. Satisfaction with services provided by various administrative offices ranged from 84% to 95%.<sup>20</sup>

By the fall of 1992, several indicators pointed to serious problems. Although enrollment had reached 634, most of the increase came in non-traditional students enrolled in evening classes. The number of traditional students was declining, and dorms had many unfilled spaces. Moreover, an accumulated deficit amounted to more than \$600,000.<sup>21</sup>

President Cheek assured trustees that progress was being made, reporting the reduction of capital indebtedness to less than \$300,000, which, he believed, could be eliminated by 1993. Endowment had grown by four hundred percent, and alumni giving in 1991 totaled nearly \$400,000 with the number of alumni donors increasing by twenty-five percent. He also noted several improvements in buildings and

grounds.

In the same report, the president stated his belief that it was time for the college "to move to another level," proposing that consideration be given to offering a master's degree, to the establishment of a preparatory academy, to opening an educational center in England, and to initiating day classes in Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Oak Ridge. He optimistically declared, "Make no mistake; we have made enormous, even spectacular strides. The future is bright because of these successes. We are not through yet, however."<sup>22</sup>

Trustees remained concerned about enrollment and authorized the president to secure the services of a professional recruiting firm. D.H. Dagley and Associates of Atlanta was employed at an annual cost of approximately \$150,000. Emphasis was to be given to the recruitment of full-time resident students with a goal of two hundred new day students by the fall of 1993.<sup>23</sup>

At the April 1993 meeting of the trustees, further discouraging news emerged. Freshman enrollment was down for the second consecutive year, loss of resident students resulted in 130 empty dormitory beds, the operational debt was increasing, and cash flow was a serious problem. Faculty salaries were in desperate need of attention, but requisite funds were not available. Further improvements in facilities were needed, especially at Petty-Manker Hall. Recent policy changes by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and by the Tennessee Department of Education introduced requirements which had severe budget implications. On a positive note, President Check reported that annual giving approached \$500,000 and that he still believed the situation would "get better."<sup>24</sup>

Apprised of the escalating operational debt, trustees directed the reduction of the 1993-94 proposed budget by \$150,000, the elimination of three proposed new faculty positions, and the reduction of the recommended faculty salary increase from eight percent to five percent.

The trustees' executive committee held six called meetings between their regularly scheduled spring and fall sessions and discussed at length how best to deal with the growing financial crisis.

A bombshell exploded at the trustees' meeting in October 1993, with the announcement that the one million dollars from the Neff estate which had been set aside as an in-house line of credit from which the college could borrow was "gone." Funds from the account had been used to pay bills. Moreover, the proposed budget for 1993-94 showed a deficit of \$700,000. The severity of the financial crisis led President Check to ask the faculty to consider a voluntary salary reduction "in the amount equal to the raises last year." The reduction would not be retroactive to the beginning of the school year but would begin in November. The president took a \$10,000 pay reduction in order to encourage a similar action by faculty members.<sup>26</sup>

Harry Sherman, who had joined the board of trustees in 1992, was elected chairman with Don Reid to serve as vice-chairman and Kenneth Higgins as secretary. Sherman's chairmanship of the board brought to the position a businessman who



was a strong and resolute leader, not afraid to ask hard questions and to make tough decisions. His election meant the end of business as usual. Sherman told the trustees, "We have a real uphill battle to restore financial stability to this institution." He accepted that responsibility, he said, and felt that his fellow trustees would do the same. As he answered the challenge, Sherman declared, "This board of trustees has got to get more involved in what's going on at this college than we have in the past. . . We need to know more about enrollment, recruitment, development, and finances." Although President Cheek had spoken of the mission of the college, Sherman said, "I don't think we have a good vision of who we are as a college and where we want to go and how we are going to get there." The new chairman closed his remarks by pledging his "best efforts."<sup>27</sup>

President Cheek announced his resignation on November 17, 1993. "I've been dealing with this thought for some time," he said. "I've been at this job longer than most college presidents. . . I just want to sit back and take it a little easy and then go on to other things."<sup>28</sup>

Trustees planned to appoint a presidential search committee within a month. In the meantime, Harry Sherman agreed to assume the duties of president until the appointment of a replacement.

## CHAPTER 14

### DIFFICULT DECISIONS AND DARING ACTIONS: 1993-1995



“Through much distress and pain,  
Through many a conflict here,  
Through blood, ye just the entrance gain,  
Yet, O disdain to fear.”

- Charles Wesley

When trustees asked Harry Sherman to act as interim president, they also appointed a presidential search committee to be chaired by Dr. Lillian Cook, trustee, alumna, and educator. During the 1993 Christmas holidays, Sherman received notification from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools that he could not simultaneously hold the positions of trustees' chairman and interim president. Because of this ruling, the vice-chairman, Don Reid, an Athens attorney, assumed the duties of chairman. Bill Kilbride, trustee, alumnus and president of the American Rug Company, became vice-chairman.<sup>1</sup>

Harry Sherman quickly proved that he was a man of action rather than words. Property in Scott County containing coal deposits had been acquired in 1934. The mining or sale of this acreage had been discussed for some fifty years. At the February 1994 meeting of the trustees, just three months after assuming the presidency, Sherman announced that the Scott County coal property was to be sold “within a few days” for \$350,000, a gain of over 4,000% of its assessed value in 1934.<sup>2</sup>

Sherman, a 1959 graduate of Wesleyan, was a native of Alabama and a veteran of the Korean War. He had lived in Athens while employed by Bowater Paper Corporation. At this time, he had attended Wesleyan and had graduated with a degree in business. After attending Stanford University for postgraduate study, he quickly moved up the corporate ladder to become highly successful in the paper industry. Before retirement, he served as president of Boise-Cascade Canada and was one of the owners of Howard Paper Mills in Dayton, Ohio. In recognition of his achievements, the Tennessee Wesleyan Alumni Association named him the 1988 recipient of its Distinguished Alumnus Award.

Sherman assumed leadership of a struggling institution. The budget was a million dollars in the red, enrollment was declining, faculty and student morale was low, and infighting had broken out among faculty groups. As a former business executive,

Sherman brought the type of skills needed at this critical stage in the college's history.

Hearing rumors of serious financial problems, members of the Athens community wondered if they were about to lose their college. Sherman felt that one of his first duties was to dispel such fears. In an interview published in *The Daily Post-Athenian* in December 1993, he acknowledged short-term financial difficulties but stated that already measures were being taken to correct deficiencies. It was true, he said, that one might take a cursory look at the college and say, "They're going broke; they've got a deficit." Actually, he explained, the institution was in relatively sound condition with all buildings free of debt. "All the buildings, all the facilities, everything is paid for, and that is a little bit unusual."<sup>3</sup>

With operational expenses being the chief problem, Sherman moved quickly to reduce costs. A twenty-five percent reduction in staff was a decision not well received by several employees. All adjunct and a few full-time faculty members were dismissed and their teaching loads distributed among remaining professors. The school nurse's position was eliminated and the maintenance crew reduced to two members. Sherman believed that such drastic measures were necessary to "stop the bleeding" and put the school in a sound financial condition.

Football was the next to go. The program had been in existence for nine years with only one winning season, in 1993 under the leadership of Coach David Bankston who resigned at the end of the 1993 season. Football was costly, and many of the players failed to share the same standards and goals held by the majority of the student body. "Obviously," said Sherman, "our small liberal arts college couldn't support a football program to the level it needed and deserved to be competitive." The sport was eliminated with the promise that the college would honor all financial aid commitments to team members who wished to remain as students.<sup>4</sup>

Sherman realized that T. W. C. needed more than a sound financial base and gave attention to academic standards. His stated goal was to move the school toward becoming a "college of distinction" by 2000 through implementing a strategic plan called "T. W. C. 2000." The plan involved a six-year development process named "Continuous Improvement" with five goals to be reached: academic excellence; state-of-the-art facilities; financial stability; enrollment growth by fifty percent; and increased service to church, community, and region. In order to achieve these ambitious goals, an estimated \$11,000,000 above operating costs would be needed. Almost half of this sum would be used for additional scholarships and other forms of financial aid.<sup>5</sup>

Teams composed of faculty, staff, and students undertook a review of programs and activities. These teams met regularly and, after reviewing their assigned areas, recommended changes to the president. Community involvement was sought by the establishment of twelve advisory councils. Made up of community leaders, each council was assigned an academic department to which the council would offer advice and assistance. Perhaps the most successful of these was the group working with the

music department. Under the leadership of Harry Johnson, Jr., this council raised \$60,000 for the renovation of the stage in Townsend Hall. Improvements included the installation of new sound and lighting systems and the refurbishing of dressing rooms and the auditorium's foyer. This council also sponsored a musical program called "Arts on Campus." Unfortunately, some councils accomplished little or nothing since some professors were reluctant to accept advice from non-educators whom they considered to be unfamiliar with academic fields of study.

A change in administration came with the replacement of Dean Barry Chambers by Dr. Keith Jenkins, a United Methodist minister, who was given the title of executive vice-president. Jenkins previously had held a similar position at Lon Morris College, a United Methodist institution located in Jacksonville, Texas. He had earned both M. A. and Ph. D. degrees from Rice University as well as a Master of Divinity from Duke University.

Another Jenkins, not related to the new vice-president, joined the administrative staff. After twenty years of distinguished service, Jean Arrants retired as vice-president for financial affairs and was replaced by Jackie Jenkins.

Old College came alive again when the president's office and the office of alumni affairs moved from Townsend Hall into the historic building. The interior of Old College and of the student center in Townsend were enhanced by the addition of attractive rugs donated by alumni Bill Kilbride, John Thornton, Web Coe, Anthony McLin, and Jason Stuckey.

At the suggestion of Sherman, trustees and faculty formulated the following new mission statement, which was adopted in February 1994:

The vision of Tennessee Wesleyan College is to provide a quality liberal arts education and to promote integrity and responsibility in a Christian environment where students can mature intellectually and socially and acquire the confidence to serve in an ever-changing global community.<sup>6</sup>

At the April 1944 meeting of the trustees, President Sherman recounted changes made and spoke of his "tough decisions" which "hadn't been a lot of fun" but which he deemed necessary. He optimistically reported that a renewal process was well underway which would result in a "solid foundation" on which to build for the future. However, the immediate financial condition was troublesome. Finance Committee Chairman Brody Ellis reported that a deficit of \$400,000 existed at the end of March and that banks had been asked to increase the college's line of credit.<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Lillian Cook informed the group that the presidential search committee was ready to begin the process of advertising and receiving applications, which would continue until December. The committee charged with promoting campus religious life expressed concern about the small number of students planning careers in the ministry or in other Christian service. President Sherman agreed to address this situation, suggesting the formation of a community religious life council.<sup>8</sup>

The tone of the meeting was generally optimistic but became less so when the



student representative, Charles Ensminger, made his report. Ensminger read a letter from the Student Government Association which indicated that as the college focused on survival, students felt themselves pushed into the background. The letter stated, "It is the general opinion of students that the institution has become so obsessed with self-preservation at any cost that the immediate needs of students are being overlooked." Ensminger asserted that students were "tired of not knowing the future of this institution" and "tired of hearing of major decisions and cuts, that affect them personally, after the fact." However, said Ensminger, he found attitudes expressed at the board meeting encouraging and felt that the upcoming summer break might serve to relieve tension.<sup>9</sup>

Several board members responded by assuring Ensminger that students were always the primary concern of trustees. The statement was also made that "students must understand that unless the college meets its financial obligations, there will be no school for students to attend." Chairman Reid agreed to respond by letter to the Student Government Association, expressing appreciation for student involvement and the willingness of trustees to work with students to address their concerns.<sup>10</sup>

At the close of the April meeting, Sherman spoke appreciatively of the good work performed by Carl and Pamela Beck whose positions in the development office had been eliminated in the recent staff reduction.<sup>11</sup>

Not only were students uneasy, but there was also a lack of harmony among the faculty. Disagreements among faculty members were not new to Wesleyan, or, for that matter, to any institution. Airing of differences can, in some cases, even be healthy. However, sharp and troubling divisions had become evident during the previous administration and grew in intensity during this interim period of heightened tension. Some faculty groups were pitted against the administration, individuals were hostile toward other individuals, and some departments were in contention with other departments. Faculty meetings sometimes became battlegrounds. The most troubling aspect of the situation was that students often were drawn into the hostilities and encouraged to take sides.<sup>12</sup>

Characteristically, President Sherman took a direct approach to this serious problem, firing off a memo to all employees. The duty and responsibility of every college employee, he wrote, "is to uphold and support the college administration and other colleagues." Discussions and debates of differences in opinion were permissible and even encouraged but were not to involve students. Mincing no words, the president warned, "Anyone, teacher or staff, who makes open statements to students that undermine the administration or another faculty or staff person will be subject to immediate dismissal."<sup>13</sup>

A major frustration for Sherman was the resistance of some faculty members to his policies. Some felt that the president was too business-oriented and lacked understanding of how an educational institution differed from an industry. They feared that his position might be prolonged beyond an interim period. When Sherman brought to the campus a business consulting team for a seminar in Total Quality

Management, the program was not well received, and questions were raised as to how this approach applied to improving the quality of education. However, when a group from Belmont College presented a seminar advocating a quite similar approach that had succeeded at Belmont, their program was received positively.<sup>14</sup>

Despite opposition, Sherman kept up a hectic pace during long work hours as he assiduously promoted the college to alumni and to other supporters, sought new contacts, and hammered home his plan for "continuous improvement." Through his contacts in business and industry, he proved to be a successful fundraiser. His diligence and dedication were undeniable, and although some employees were less than supportive, there were others who found his straightforward approach and his total honesty to be refreshing.

At the college's 137th Commencement, Sherman presented degrees to 106 members of the Class of 1994. Delivering the commencement address was R. Wiley Bourne, Jr., executive vice-president of Eastman Chemical Company and a trustee. A degree in liberal arts, Bourne assured graduates, was becoming increasingly attractive to employers in the current job market.<sup>15</sup>

The first fall registration of Sherman's tenure brought encouraging enrollment figures. In spite of the loss of more than fifty football players, students numbered over 630. Contributing to growth in the student body were 263 non-traditional students attending evening or off-campus classes. The number of these older adults increased by thirty- one percent in comparison to the previous fall, reflecting the diligent work of Nancy Brooks, Knoxville coordinator; David Barker, Chattanooga coordinator; and Jay May, evening school director. Also encouraging was the fact that ACT scores of entering freshmen averaged 21.5, well above the 18.5 average of the previous year.<sup>16</sup>

The financial picture also looked brighter. The 1994 fundraising campaign, led by trustee Bill Kilbride and alumnus Tom Hamilton, added more than a million dollars to college coffers. The Teagle Foundation provided a grant of \$50,000 toward the Facility Master Plan, a part of Sherman's 'T. W. C. 2000 strategy. The master plan called for improvements to classrooms, library, dormitories, and Townsend Hall as well as the construction of a student wellness center and enlarged parking lots. A gift of \$35,000 established the General Warren B. Giles Endowed Scholarship with priority in its awarding to be given to Wesleyan students who were children or grandchildren of military veterans.<sup>17</sup>

If Sherman and the trustees had hoped for a more contented student body during the 1994-95 term, they were disappointed. Students became even more vocal in their complaints. Cuts in faculty and staff still bothered them, and they made their feelings known. A major complaint was the elimination of the position of school nurse. A writer in the *New Exponent* stated that students were "growing impatient" and wanted action on their request that a nurse be employed. A solution to this problem eventually came, in the spring semester, with the enrollment of a student who was a registered nurse and who could live on campus.<sup>18</sup>

Another proposed method of reducing costs, which met with strong student opposition, was the plan under consideration to close one floor in each of two dormitories. If the second floor of Fowler Hall and the third floor of Keith Hall were unoccupied and their previous occupants relocated, an estimated saving of \$31,000 could be effected. At a November "town meeting" where Sherman spoke of his T.W.C. 2000 plan to students, faculty, and staff, a student rose to directly challenge the president with angry remarks. Sherman explained that a decision regarding the dormitories had not been finalized.<sup>19</sup>

A large number of students signed a petition presented to the president in opposition to closing dormitory floors. Stated reasons for opposition included: crowded rooms, each with two and perhaps three occupants; loss of jobs by some resident assistants; the presence of two sorority meeting rooms on the third floor of Keith; and the inconvenience of relocation. Students indicated their willingness to participate in an energy conservation plan. President Sherman, rather uncharacteristically, bowed out of this situation by saying that he would leave the decision to the executive vice-president, Keith Jenkins, and to the dean of students, Stan Harrison. Students were the winners in this conflict, for the dormitory arrangements remained the same.<sup>20</sup>

In 1993 and 1994, the college lost, through their retirement, three outstanding faculty members whose long experience and proven ability had made them strong assets during troubled times. All three retirees were given emeritus status.

B.T. Hutson completed thirty-six years of service at the end of the 1992-93 term. An able teacher in the business administration and economics department, he chaired the department for more than twenty years and taught classes in at least twenty different areas of business. He also directed the evening program for nine years.

Betty Keirn, associate professor of health and physical education, retired in 1994 after twenty-eight years at Wesleyan. A popular teacher, Keirn stressed the *education* element of physical education and held her students to high standards of achievement. It would be interesting to know the number of those taught to swim and given proficiency in lifesaving techniques by Betty Keirn.

Also in 1994, Dr. Robert Ryberg retired from the education department after a T.W.C. career of twenty-two years. Ryberg had brought stability to a department which previously had seen frequent changes in directors. Through his sound preparation of prospective teachers, he contributed greatly to public education in the area. Unfortunately, Dr. Ryberg's retirement years were cut short by his death in June 1995.

Jane Miller Schultz retired from the library staff in 1993, and her name was added to a plaque in the library recognizing those giving twenty-five or more years of service. Her name joined the names of Claryse Myers and Vera Coe. During her long career, Schultz contributed ably to virtually every function of the library.

Another long-time employee, James Sherman, was honored at Homecoming 1994 by the alumni association which presented him with a plaque in recognition of fifty years of service. Sherman was a teenager when he began to work with the

maintenance crew. A loyal workman and quite a humorist, "James," as he is known to everyone, is a popular figure on campus and, as of this writing, continues his service on a part-time basis.

Quality of the faculty was again reflected in honors won. Dr. Robert Ryberg was selected for inclusion in the 1994 edition of *Who's Who Among America's Teachers*, a distinction awarded to only five percent of the nation's educators. Dr. Jeffrey Folks of the English department was named a Fulbright Scholar for 1994-95 during which time he was to be a senior lecturer on American literature at Sophia University in Bulgaria. Dr. Durwood Dunn, history professor, received notification that his book, *Cade's Cove: The Life and Death of a Southern Appalachian Community*, was to be listed in the bibliography for National History Day, a compilation of selected works published in *Magazine of History* by the Organization of American Historians. Faculty Incentive Awards recognized the superior teaching of Dr. Joyce Baker, chemistry; Jim Thompson, sociology; Dr. Jean Stevenson, education; Linda Garza, sociology; Dr. Dick Pelley, psychology; Tom Oneal, business; and Gary Long, mathematics.

A distinct honor came to a staff member in 1994 when Edna Simpson, director of financial aid, received statewide recognition from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. The Tennessee Community Service Award honors those who make unusually significant contributions to their communities through activities apart from their day-to-day job responsibilities. Simpson held various leadership positions in the Athens Civitan Club, which assists the mentally and physically handicapped, was a volunteer counselor for Contact Teleministry Program, gave CPR instruction for the Red Cross, and was an active participant in "Toys for Tots" and in the HAL (Help Adults Learn) tutorial program. President Sherman had the perception to recognize an unusual, though modest, public servant and nominated Simpson for this award.<sup>21</sup>

President Sherman announced his resignation on January 9, 1995. Although he had consistently declared his position to be temporary, the news came as a surprise to many at the college and in the community. According to an article in *The Daily Post-Athenian*, a news release from the college indicated that Sherman had submitted his written resignation to the trustees at their December meeting, had then agreed to consider staying until a new president was elected, but on January 5, had informed the executive committee of his decision to step down immediately. The news release quoted Sherman as saying, "I never intended to be at the college permanently when I accepted the interim position over a year ago." He praised the people of Athens who, he said, "have been wonderful to my wife, Frankie, and me. We feel close ties to this community and, for a time, even considered moving back to Athens permanently. The students and faculty at Wesleyan are also special, but any positive influence I may have effected at the college is now pretty well neutralized, and it is time to go."<sup>22</sup>

The same newspaper article stated that Don Reid, trustees' chairman, reported that the trustees had known since early December of Sherman's probable resignation. Reid commented on Sherman's good work, stating that during his interim presidency, enrollment had increased, an executive vice-president had been hired, a system of



planned growth had been developed, and the most successful annual fund drive in the school's history had been completed. "We're really fortunate to have had him for a year," said Reid, "and we're grateful for the year we got from him." The appointment of a new president should be announced by July, according to Chairman Reid.<sup>23</sup>

In an editorial on January 10, *The Daily Post-Athenian* noted that "Sherman faced having to make many tough decisions during his tenure; some were received well and others were difficult for some people to accept. But Sherman always acted with the best interests of T.W.C. in mind. . . We believe Harry Sherman did his job well, and he will be missed."<sup>24</sup>

Trustees, meeting in February, passed a resolution in commendation of Sherman, stating that the board "appreciates, congratulates, and is indebted to him for his efforts and deep personal sacrifice."<sup>25</sup>

At this February meeting, trustees had to face some hard facts. The college was again without a president, spring enrollment showed a shortfall of fifty-nine students, and the 1994-95 budget needed an additional \$400,000 in order to break even. Moreover, Jackie Jenkins, chief financial officer, had resigned to accept a more lucrative position, and three board members, Brody Ellis, Bill Hawkins, and Lee Stewart, had tendered their resignations.

Dr. Shelley Griffith and Regenia Mayfield were elected as new board members, Dr. Lillian Cook and Bill Hicks were named honorary trustees, and the board approved Chairman Reid's suggestion that Jean Arrants be asked to return temporarily as interim vice-president for financial affairs.<sup>26</sup>

The question remained as to who would administer the college's daily operation until the election of a new president. Bill Kilbride, executive committee chairman, brought to the floor the committee's recommendation that Dr. Keith Jenkins, executive vice-president, assume that responsibility. Dr. Jenkins expressed reluctance to accept the position in the absence of clarity concerning just what duties he would be assigned, what authority he would be given, and what his title would be. After considerable discussion, Kilbride withdrew the motion of the executive committee, and the question of interim leadership remained unresolved.<sup>27</sup>

John Head, newly appointed director of admissions, addressed the trustees with some cogent remarks. When he assumed his position in January, Head reported, he began to ask various people about their view of the college. What soon became apparent, he said, was that "two Tennessee Wesleyan Colleges existed" and that the college of yesterday "sounded like a wonderful place." Yesterday's Tennessee Wesleyan, Head continued, was respected for its rigorous academic program, its outstanding faculty, its thorough preparation of students, and its role as the cultural center of the community. In the viewpoint of the general public, today's Wesleyan is a college in "serious trouble," "constantly asking for money," no longer a "cultural center," and likely to close soon. His office's main difficulty, Head maintained, was to change the public's perception, to convince people that yesterday's Wesleyan survives, and to persuade students that "Tennessee Wesleyan is a place where they can get a good

education, where they can have interaction with the faculty in a small classroom environment.”<sup>28</sup>

Trustees were forced to acknowledge three gigantic tasks: increasing the fall 1995 enrollment by 250 new students; raising approximately \$500,000 in unrestricted contributions by the end of the 1995 fiscal year; and raising a total of \$875,000 during the calendar year 1995. If these goals should not be met, the viability of the institution would be severely affected. Aware of this possibility, the board approved a motion “to authorize its executive committee to explore all possible opportunities for the college to manage its own future, to include specific discussion and conversation with administrative authorities of other academic institutions and authorities of higher education operating within the geographic concern of Tennessee Wesleyan or having authority over institutions within that region.” The word *merger* was not used but certainly lurked in the background. Trustees left the February meeting with grave concerns about the future.<sup>29</sup>

Two weeks after the trustees’ meeting the executive committee asked Bill Akins to assume temporary leadership of the college. Akins, an alumnus and former director of the evening program, had retired in 1993 but, early in 1994, had been asked by Harry Sherman to assist with administration.

Some members of the executive committee, armed with the trustees’ authorization to seek opportunities through contact with other educational institutions, entered into a preliminary discussion with officials of Cleveland State Community College. The plan under consideration was a merger of the two institutions with each retaining its own campus and its distinctive mission.

Cleveland State officials favored the merger, as did some Tennessee Wesleyan trustees. When the idea became known to the campus community, some faculty and staff saw an opportunity for greater job security; others opposed the plan. The majority of alumni expressed opposition. Current students were afforded little opportunity to air their views, which would lead to a future complaint. The proposed plan would need approval from the trustees, the Holston Conference, and the State of Tennessee. State approval included acceptance by the Board of Regents, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, the governor, and the state legislature. College trustees were polled by mail, and the result was a firm rejection. Once again, a proposed merger had failed.

Having rejected the merger, trustees arrived on campus for their April meeting prepared to focus their attention on the election of a new president. They were greeted in an unexpected fashion. A large sign posted on Old College read: “PULL US TOGETHER – DON’T TEAR US APART” Copies of a two-page student publication entitled “The Board-Dogger” awaited the attention of trustees. “The Board-Dogger” directed severe criticism toward the group for its failure to consider students in its planning. The fact that trustees remained somewhat divided on the merger issue added to the tension.

At the beginning of the meeting, Bill Akins offered remarks on the necessity of

a cooperative and harmonious spirit. He reported that when he arrived at the college that morning, the staff was busily removing some signs posted by students. He had insisted that the Old College sign remain, supporting the right of students to express their views and noting that they had acted responsibly and with no destruction. "We desperately need harmony on this campus," said Akins, "and we as administrators, as faculty, as staff, as students, and as members of the board need to remember that."<sup>30</sup>

At the request of trustees, Charles Ensminger, the board's student representative, spoke of student unrest. Students wanted their opinions to be respected, they wanted information about the college's future, they wanted recruitment of well-qualified students, they wanted the retention of good faculty members, and they wanted the academic reputation and the mission of the college to be remembered. Ensminger found it symbolic of the lack of student focus that, during his four years as a student, a dormitory had been closed but two administration buildings had been opened. Speaking of recruitment and of the college's mission, Ensminger continued, "Wesleyan cannot continue to be all things to all people. . . A Christian institution needs to define itself as a Christian institution. Recently the letterhead and the envelopes have dropped the flame and the cross and replaced them with a picture of Old College. . . We worry about recruitment. We want good students who will stay here more than one or two years, who will take time to get involved. . . We are concerned about losing good faculty members who care about students."<sup>31</sup>

Trustees discussed these remarks and agreed that a dinner meeting be scheduled, prior to the end of the school year, when students, trustees, faculty, and staff could come together to voice concerns and seek solutions.

Reporting for the presidential search committee, Dr. Lillian Cook stated that, after reviewing some eighty applications, the committee had narrowed the field to three candidates. Only one round of voting was needed to reach a unanimous choice. The committee recommended the election of Dr. B. James Dawson, currently serving as vice-president for student and institutional development at Fort Hays State University in Kansas. Trustees voted unanimously to accept the recommendation.<sup>32</sup>

Students clearly were paying attention to institutional matters but not to the neglect of other interests. Football was gone, but other sports thrived. The women's basketball team, in 1993-94, won twelve of their fourteen games, captured the trophy at the district tournament, and earned a trip to the N.A.I.A. national tournament in Oregon. The trip's estimated cost was \$1,500, a sum the college could ill afford. Ken Higgins, in characteristic fashion, offered a generous contribution and assumed the responsibility for raising the remainder. In 1995, the Lady Bulldogs again played in the national tournament. Although the national crown evaded Coach Stan Harrison and his competent team, their two appearances in the tournament constituted a high honor.

In the 1993-94 baseball season, the Bulldogs achieved a 35-8 record, and Coach Wayne Norfleet was named Coach of the Year by the Tennessee-Virginia Athletic Conference. The 1994-95 team won the T.V.A.C. title for the fourth consecutive year.

Both the golf team and the women's soccer team won district championships. With sixteen victories in 1993-94, Coach Travis Hart and his women's softball team had their first winning season since the inception of the softball program in 1985.

The spring tour of the T.W.C. Choir and Consolidation took the performers to Tennessee churches in Greeneville, Chattanooga, Cleveland, and Clinton and to Smyrna, Georgia. The annual dinner of the International Club featured dishes popular in a variety of countries including Japan, Russia, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic. Students in the English department held a poetry reading at the Backstage Coffeehouse on North White Street. The African-American Student Union sponsored a convocation as part of the celebration of Black History Month.

As the 1996 spring semester drew to a close, students crammed for exams, and seniors looked forward to graduation. A calmer atmosphere prevailed. Students had been included in interviews of the finalists among candidates for the presidency and were pleased with the selection of Dr. B. James Dawson as Tennessee Wesleyan's eighteenth president.



## CHAPTER 15

### ON THE REBOUND: 1995-2002



**“How beauteous nature now!  
How dark and sad before!  
With joy we view the pleasing change,  
And nature’s God adore!”**

*- John Wesley*

Dr. B. James Dawson brought to the presidency sound academic credentials and valuable professional experience. He held both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree from the University of Evansville as well as a doctoral degree in higher education administration from Indiana University. His administrative experience included fifteen years at the University of Evansville and seven years at Fort Hays State University. He was also a dedicated churchman who, at the time of his appointment, served on the finance committee and taught a Sunday school class at the First Methodist Church of Hays, Kansas.

Along with his academic and professional credentials, Dawson possessed assets not so easily measured but vital to his position. His readiness to laugh, his winning smile, and the warmth of his personality were attractive to faculty, students, alumni, and townspeople. From the beginning of his presidency, he made a point of establishing a strong relationship with students, sitting with them at lunch in the college dining room, welcoming them to his office, and listening attentively to their opinions and concerns. Another asset was his gracious wife, Karen, who immediately became a liked and respected member of the community. The Dawsons were the parents of a son, Gene, and a daughter, Jamie. Their second grandchild was born while they were at Wesleyan.

The spirit of optimism and commitment which characterized Dawson’s presidency appears in his acceptance letter addressed to the trustees: “The opportunity to serve this fine institution will provide for me a rewarding challenge. I am confident that with the help and support of the trustees we can renew the glimmer of this gem of Athens, East Tennessee, and the Holston Conference. I certainly look forward to being a part of such a splendid learning community. The rich heritage of the college speaks to the fine leadership it has enjoyed over the course of the past century and

more. Together we will make a tremendous difference in the future of the institution.”<sup>1</sup>

Because of the terms of his contract with Fort Hays, Dawson did not officially assume the presidency until July 1995. He did, however, visit the campus on several occasions and was present at the May commencement exercises where he introduced the speaker, Congressman John J. Duncan, Jr., and presented diplomas to graduates.

At the commencement, nobody had more fun with his inadvertent slip of the tongue than did Dawson himself. With all proper dignity, he began the presentation of degrees with the words, “By the power vested in me by the State of Kansas. . .” This gave the dean, a bit later, an opportunity for the appropriate quotation from *The Wizard of Oz*: “I don’t think we’re in Kansas any more.”

During his preliminary visits to the campus, Dr. Dawson had an opportunity to assess the college’s condition. He concluded that, although the institution faced challenges, its strengths received insufficient emphasis. Its location, midway between Knoxville and Chattanooga, combined a pleasant small-town atmosphere with easy access to the shopping, entertainment, and dining opportunities of larger cities. With its facilities debt-free, it had only short-term indebtedness. Its academic excellence was far greater than he had at first realized, an achievement due largely to the untiring efforts and faithfulness of an exceptional core faculty. Dawson stated his belief that Tennessee Wesleyan suffered from an unjustified “inferiority complex” and that it was time to take pride in and to proclaim to the public its superior qualities.

Dr. Dawson’s formal inauguration as Tennessee Wesleyan’s eighteenth president occurred on March 28, 1996, nine months after he assumed the position. The inaugural address was given by Edward H. Hammond, president of Fort Hays State University, and Bishop Clay F. Lee conducted the installation ceremony. Other participants included: George Naff and Jim Cheek, former presidents; Bill Kilbride, Shelly Griffith, and Cary Davis, trustees; Josh Yother, Student Government Association president; the Reverend Gary Grogg, superintendent of the Holston Conference’s Cleveland District; Lawrence Roseberry, mayor of Athens; and Ron Banks, McMinn County executive. Representatives from thirty-one colleges and universities joined the academic procession.

Challenges which the new president needed to address were essentially the same issues which every president in the school’s long history has faced. The primary needs as always, were to increase enrollment, to erase indebtedness, and to build endowment. Well aware of these ever-present concerns, Dawson first turned his attention to the immediate problem of the depleted faculty and staff. Among those employed to fill vacancies were: Martha H. Chambers, a 1981 graduate, who was appointed vice-president of finance; Dr. Dianne Pfeiffer, director of financial aid; Diana B. Kilby, registrar; Dr. Stephen R. Herr, assistant professor of education; and Paul D. Reneau, assistant professor of health, physical education, and recreation.

With the resignation of Dr. Keith Jenkins, the office of academic dean also became vacant but was soon and ably filled by the appointment of Dr. Philip W. Ott.

Dr. Ott was a friend of Dawson, and the two had worked together at the University of Evansville where, at the time of his appointment, Ott was chairman of the department of religion and philosophy. A graduate of Asbury College, Ott held a master's degree from Princeton Theological seminary and a Ph. D. from the University of Pennsylvania. Additionally, he had done postdoctoral study in micro-medical ethics at Texas Medical Center and had been awarded a fellowship for research at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics Center for Bioethics at Georgetown University. In announcing the appointment, Dawson said that Ott had "devoted his entire career to education in the United Methodist tradition and clearly understands the mission of Tennessee Wesleyan." Dr. Ott was given the title of provost and academic dean.<sup>2</sup>

With the appointment of Dr. Philip Ott, the college also acquired a well-qualified professor for the biology department. The new dean's wife, Dr. Karen Ott, received a B. A. degree from Asbury College, an M. S. from the University of Kentucky, and a Ph. D. from Rutgers. A member of the faculty of the University of Evansville for twenty-five years, she also had taught at the Evansville Center of Medical Education of the Indiana School of Medicine. In 1995, she received the Outstanding Teacher Award, a national honor awarded by the United Methodist Church.<sup>3</sup>

Fall enrollment in 1995 exceeded expectations. The Athens campus welcomed 214 new students including 100 freshmen. The evening program saw an increase of sixty-seven new students. Since competition with state, tax-supported institutions presented a major difficulty in recruitment, a 13.7% reduction in the tuition fee was announced in the spring of 1995. This reduction, along with the effective work of admissions personnel, brought continuing growth in the student body. Students on the main campus numbered 340 in 1994; in 2000, the number was close to 700. Enrollment continued to climb during Dawson's tenure and reached the highest number since the late 1960s. Admission standards were not lowered but raised, and the average ACT score of freshmen entering in 1996 was 22, a quite respectable rating.<sup>4</sup>

Convinced that making the campus more attractive would aid in student recruitment, President Dawson directed growing financial resources toward the improvement of buildings and grounds. One of the first buildings to receive attention was Durham Hall which had been renovated in 1968 but needed further improvement. The weatherworn bricks of the structure, built in 1902, showed deterioration, and the interior needed a facelift. Over a period of three summers, the bricks were painstakingly secured, new carpeting was installed, and a paint job brightened the interior. A decision welcomed by alumni was the renaming of the building to memorialize the original donor. Durham Hall became, appropriately, Banfield-Durham Hall.

Another old building, Petty-Manker Hall, was less fortunate. The former men's dormitory and dining hall was erected in 1913. The addition of more modern dormitories along with declining enrollment in the 1970s brought about its closing as a residence hall. Petty-Manker since had been used for a variety of purposes, including a site for genetic research on mice (for which it was nicknamed "mouse house"), an education research lab, offices and classrooms for the art and behavioral sciences de-

partments, and finally as the site for ESL (English as a Second Language) instruction. Because few improvements had been made and repair was judged to be too expensive, Petty-Manker was razed in the summer of 2000 and replaced by a much-needed student parking area.

At Petty-Manker's cornerstone laying in 1913, a time capsule containing appropriate items was placed in the cornerstone. This container was opened during Homecoming 2000 and the following contents revealed:

a list of alumni of U. S. Grant University, 1866-96  
two copies of *The Exponent*, 1913  
yearbook of U. S. Grant University, 1893-94  
yearbook of East Tennessee Wesleyan University, 1884-85  
*Times of Athens, Tennessee*  
*University Lookout*, student newspaper of Grant University, 1904  
catalogs of The Athens School of the University of Chattanooga, 1908-09  
and 1911-12  
commencement program, 1913  
*Doctrines and Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, 1912  
program of cornerstone laying of Petty-Manker Hall, 1913  
*Methodist Advocate Journal*, 1905  
*The Athens Post*, May 1913  
*The Athenian*, April 1913

These items are now in the archives room of the Merner-Pfeiffer Library.<sup>5</sup>

The baseball field complex received improvement and enlargement and was named Jack Bowling Field in honor of the long-time faculty member and sports supporter. Bowling gave generously of his own resources and worked tirelessly to raise additional funds for the field.

Several changes occurred in the Merner-Pfeiffer Library. The familiar card catalogs were replaced by an automated system, call numbers changed from the Dewey Decimal System to the Library of Congress System, and the library went online. Library automation was funded by a grant from the Benwood Foundation, by matching funds, and by technology fees paid by students.

One room in the library became a repository for rare books and for historical documents of the college and of the Methodist Church. The renovation of this room was funded by Mr. and Mrs. Wiley Bourne. Dedicated at Homecoming 2001, it was named Thomas Glenn Reading and Archival Room in honor of Mrs. Bourne's father. While the library staff has done an admirable job in organizing materials, more attention to the collection is needed, and valuable historical documents are still located in various places on campus with some yet to be unearthed. The authors of this history strongly recommend employment of a part-time archivist to assist in the location, organization, and preservation of documents related to the college's rich



history and to the history of the United Methodist Church.

Another library room became, in 1996, the Genevieve Wiggins Children's Literature Room. A group of more than one hundred persons assembled for the dedication of the room honoring Wiggins who had retired after thirty years of service. In his dedication remarks, President Dawson noted that the college was not "simply dedicating a room to be used by children but dedicating a room that will become a learning laboratory, a facility for all who choose to enjoy its pleasant surroundings. It is a foundation for learning, and the collection of books is a very definable category of literature." In addition to a fine collection of books for children, the room is attractively furnished with low tables and chairs, colorful pictures and posters, and dolls, figurines and stuffed animals depicting favorite storybook characters. Its renovation was funded by Irene Neal Martin, a long-time friend of Dr. Wiggins and a generous supporter of the college.<sup>6</sup>

Two new buildings appeared on campus in 1998-99. In 1998, the college signed an agreement with Head Start for the construction of a building on Green Street. According to the contract, should Head Start cease use of the facility, the building would revert to the college. A new student residence, the Nocatula Apartments, was ready for occupation in 1999. The apartment building, located on Coach Dwain Farmer Drive adjacent to Centennial Hall, was built by private owners and leased for twenty-five years with a buyout clause by which the college could purchase the building within that period.

The addition of rocking chairs to the porch of Old College may seem insignificant in comparison to other changes. However, the appearance of these chairs during Dawson's tenure may be viewed as symbolic. With some of the problems of the past being solved, tensions eased, and the campus atmosphere became more relaxed. President Dawson recalled standing on Old College's porch on a sunny day in spring while discussing with Regenia Mayfield changes being made to enhance the college landscape. As their discussion continued, Dawson remarked that on such a pleasant day, it seemed regrettable to go inside to his office. Wouldn't it be nice if they could sit on the porch in rocking chairs? The next day, he said, rocking chairs "miraculously appeared." Since that time, Dawson said, the chairs have become an integral part of the college scene. "We have solved problems from those rocking chairs, entertained guests, provided space for students to study and relax; but perhaps of greatest importance is the statement which those chairs make to all who visit on campus. They say that we are an institution which enjoys discussion in a comfortable setting. They say, from time to time, let us stop and contemplate what we are about here." All problems, said Dawson, seem smaller when viewed from a rocking chair on a front porch, and the slow, relaxing movement of a rocking chair can bring the comfortable assurance that the unchanging mission of the college will keep it strong and alive.<sup>7</sup>

A major addition to the curriculum came in 1999 with the implementation of a nursing program. The desirability of such a program had been discussed since the 1970s, but financial constraints prevented its realization. In 1999, an agreement was

reached with Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center in Knoxville to form a partnership which would make possible a baccalaureate degree in nursing. Core curriculum courses offered on the Athens campus were to be supplemented by professional education and clinical experience at Fort Sanders facilities in Knoxville. In addition to training at Fort Sanders, further clinical experience could be obtained at nearby sites such as East Tennessee Children's Hospital, Peninsula Mental Health Center, Knox County Health Department, and nursing homes in Oak Ridge and Sevierville.

After approval was awarded by the Tennessee Board of Nursing, the first nursing class of eighteen students began their training. Core faculty for professional nursing consisted of Dr. Margaret Heins, nursing chairman; Dr. Carolyn Huff Robinson, assistant professor; Jean S. Bernard, instructor; Alice T. Grady, instructor; and Ann Walker, instructor. Staff personnel included Gail Eubanks, student services coordinator, and Nancy Ferguson, administrative assistant.<sup>8</sup>

The nursing program received full accreditation from the Commission on College Nursing Education in November 2001. In May 2001, the Tennessee Wesleyan-Fort Sanders Nursing Program held its first pinning ceremony at Church Street United Methodist Church in Knoxville, and, in Athens, seventeen students received the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) at Tennessee Wesleyan's commencement exercises. The nursing program experienced rapid growth evidenced by the fact that in April 2002 approximately fifty new students were admitted to the program.<sup>9</sup>

Changes in the physical education department included the addition of a major in sports and fitness management and in exercise science. A well-equipped exercise center was funded by a gift from John ("Thunder") Thornton, a 1975 graduate.<sup>10</sup>

The religion and philosophy department sponsored its first Wesley Study Tour in the summer of 1998, a popular opportunity for students and other participants to visit sites in England associated with John and Charles Wesley. According to Dr. Sam Roberts, department chairman, "A United Methodist church-related college should expose its students to their school's ecclesiastical tradition and to the lives of the Wesleys, whose efforts to bring knowledge and vital piety into dialogue not only represent Methodism, but Christianity at its best." The study tour was repeated, with some variations, in subsequent years.<sup>11</sup>

Tennessee Wesleyan's mission statement was revised during President Dawson's tenure to read as follows:

In keeping with the spirit of the liberal arts, Tennessee Wesleyan seeks within the framework of the Judeo-Christian tradition to provide for students the highest quality of educational experience, to promote a personal life-style founded on integrity, responsibility, meaning, and purpose, and to prepare students for a life of leadership and service in an ever-changing global community.

The problem of faculty salaries was as old as the college itself and made difficult both the recruitment and retention of superior teachers. At the fall meeting of the

trustees in 1997, Tim Carpenter, a 1967 graduate who chaired the academic affairs and religious life committee, voiced his committee's strong concern about this issue. "We are genuinely concerned, if not alarmed," said Carpenter, "and believe that this needs to be addressed immediately." Modest annual salary increments were instigated, but the faculty continued to be paid well below the national average. In the spring of 2000, Dawson informed trustees that *The Chronicle of Higher Education* listed Tennessee Wesleyan third from the bottom in terms of salaries paid to full professors in colleges of the United States. "This is an issue we must address," he declared. "We will continue to address it in increments as resources become available." As he spoke of the problem, Dawson emphasized that the low salary scale was not an indication of the faculty's quality.<sup>12</sup>

In spite of low salaries, a number of faculty members chose to come and to stay, finding attractions that outweighed monetary compensation. Free tuition for the family of an employee, including tuition to the two other Holston Conference colleges, was appealing to some. The "friendly city" of Athens was a good place to live. Classes smaller than those of a larger institution afforded the opportunity to work with students individually. The vast majority of these students came from backgrounds which encouraged both scholarship and sound moral values. Many faculty members found that the college's mission corresponded with their own career goals. Academic freedom was respected. Thus it was not unusual to find faculty and staff employed during this period who had tenures of more than twenty years. Among this group were: Robbie Ensminger (Assistant to the President and Director of Alumni Affairs); Dr. Janice Ryberg (Music); Carol Bates (Bursar); Dr. Edmond Cox (Biology); Dr. Durwood Dunn (History); Jim Thompson (Sociology); Dr. David Duncan (History); Holland Vibbert (Student Services); Dr. Joyce Baker (Chemistry); Stan Harrison (Dean of Students and Athletics); Darnell Chance (Music); Sandra Clariday (Librarian); Thomas Oneal (Business); Dr. Sam Roberts (Religion and Philosophy); and Julie Adams (Librarian).

To recognize employees who completed twenty-five or more years of service, the Nocatula Award was established in 1999 and first awarded to Dr. Edmond Cox, Dr. Janice Ryberg, Jim Thompson, and Robbie Ensminger.<sup>13</sup>

Dr. Edmond Cox retired in 1999. Cox headed the biology department and was the highly respected mentor to many students who became successful physicians.

A major change in the campus scene came with the retirement of Robbie Ensminger in 2000. During her almost half-century of service, she had been the assistant to six presidents and two interim presidents and was also the popular director of alumni affairs. For many alumni, "Robbie" was their principal contact with the college, and newly arrived presidents found her to be a reservoir of knowledge and an invaluable aid in their adjustment to a new position. In 1989, the Robbie J. Ensminger Endowed Scholarship was established in honor of her thirty-five years of service. Ensminger continues her connection with the college as a member of the board of trustees.<sup>14</sup>

The year 2000 also saw the retirement of Glenn Lowe, director of food services for eighteen years. Before coming to Wesleyan, Lowe had spent twenty-one years in the U. S. Marine Corps, serving in Korea and in Vietnam. Known affectionately as "the Chief," Lowe was much loved by faculty and staff and by students who often sought his wise counsel. Upon his retirement, the Sherman dining hall was named in his honor. The death of the Chief, in February 2006, was a sad loss to many.<sup>15</sup>

Also retiring from the earthly scene, but not from the hearts of his many friends and admirers, was George Naff, former president, who died on April 23, 1998. A gentle, caring man of faith, he was an inspiration to countless individuals who were blessed by knowing him. George and Mary Ellen Naff worked as a team in their tireless efforts for the betterment of the college. They had moved in 1992 to Asbury Acres Retirement Home in Maryville where he served as chaplain until a year before his death and where she continues to produce musical shows with retirees as performers!

While the main focus of the faculty has always been on teaching and the school has never had a "publish or perish" policy, a number of professors have published books and/or articles in scholarly journals. The years 1990-2000 were a particularly productive period for such publications. Dr. Durwood Dunn, history professor, followed his popular book on Cade's Cove with another book published by the University of Tennessee Press and entitled *An Abolitionist in the Appalachian South: Ezekiel Birdseye on Slavery, Capitalism, and Statehood in East Tennessee*. Dunn also contributed articles and book reviews to historical journals. Dr. William Ruleman, English professor, received recognition in *Orbis*, a British literary journal, which listed him as one of the "100 major modern poets." Ruleman's poems have appeared in numerous literary publications. Dr. Nancy Fisher, English professor, published her second book of poetry, *Vision at Delphi*. Dr. Paul Reneau, physical education chairman, was the co-author of an article appearing in *Journal of Exercise Physiology*. Dr. Jean Stevenson, education professor, co-authored an article published in a national journal for teachers. Dr. Stephen Herr, education professor, conducted research in the field of cooperative education which led to the publication of a book, journal articles, and a conference paper. Dr. William McDonald, chaplain and religion professor, wrote several book reviews appearing in journals concerned with church history. Dr. Ann Gowdy, English professor, produced *A Sherwood Sampler, 1869-1884*. Published by the University of Tennessee Press, the volume contained a collection of writings by Katherine Sherwood, a pioneer in dialect fiction. Dr. Genevieve Wiggins, English professor, authored the first full-length critical biography of Canadian author L. M. Montgomery which was published by Macmillan as part of the 'Twayne World Authors series. Wiggins was also a book reviewer for *The American Review of Canadian Studies*. This listing is probably incomplete but gives an indication of the faculty's scholarly achievements in addition to classroom teaching.<sup>16</sup>

President Dawson was invited, in 1997, to serve on the Presidential Leadership Group to address the issue of alcohol and drugs on college campuses. The Presi-



dential Leadership Group was created under the auspices of the U. S. Department of Education's Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse. Dawson's selection was a signal honor since representatives from only six colleges were included. The other institutions, all larger than T.W.C., were the University of Rhode Island, the University of Iowa, Ohio State University, the University of Arizona, and Prairie View A&M. Dawson continued his involvement in this group and has become nationally known for his efforts to involve the leadership of colleges and universities in prevention of alcohol and drug abuse.

Another honor bestowed on the college was its first listing, in 1999, in *U. S. News and World Report* as one of "America's Best Colleges," a distinction repeated in subsequent years.

Tennessee Wesleyan's accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools was reaffirmed in 2000. The visiting SACS committee applauded the college's rich heritage, its dedicated faculty, and its progress toward a sound financial base while expressing some concern about the extensive use of adjunct faculty at off-campus sites. The committee recommended broader use of information technology and the establishment of clearly defined links between strategic planning, assessment, and budget.<sup>17</sup>

One of the most ambitious fundraising campaigns ever undertaken was launched in 1997, a three-year effort with a goal of ten million dollars. Regenia Mayfield, trustee and 1959 graduate, chaired the campaign and was assisted by five committees seeking support from five groups of potential donors. Dr. Ralph Mohnery, Nell Mohnery, and George Oliphant led the committee working with churches of the Holston Conference, Tim Carpenter and Leon Anziano headed the industrial committee, and Bill Kilbride and Dr. William Sullins co-chaired the major gifts committee. The alumni committee was under the leadership of Charles ("Buddy") Liner, and John Perdue directed the local community effort.<sup>18</sup>

The campaign had as its theme "Together There Are No Limits" and was presented to the public at a dinner in 1998 which had Governor Don Sundquist as its keynote speaker. The governor spoke in appreciation of the importance of Tennessee's thirty-five private colleges which produce more than thirty percent of the state's graduates.<sup>19</sup>

At the dinner, President Dawson informed his audience that campaign workers had, during the past year, generated three-fourths of the ten-million goal. He reminded listeners that the year 2000 was drawing near which would mean that Tennessee Wesleyan's work would then span a period covering three centuries. "No mean feat for a small church-related institution," said Dawson, "but it's no surprise to me. We are a good place, and we're good at what we do."<sup>20</sup>

Dawson's remarks were followed by those of Regenia Mayfield who spoke appropriately of the strong connection between town and gown. "There is no doubt," she said, "that Wesleyan could never have survived without support from Athens." However, she stressed, Athens also benefited in many ways from the partnership.

The dinner closed with an inspiring performance of "Here I Am, Lord" by Keith Memorial United Methodist Church's chancel choir under the direction of Linda McGill.<sup>21</sup>

The funding campaign received a major boost with a \$487,000 grant from the Teagle Foundation, a New York City foundation with which President Harry Sherman had made the initial contact. This grant brought total gifts received to 8.5 million which enabled the college to renovate the dining room, make major improvements in Townsend Hall, supply each faculty member with a computer, improve equipment in computer labs, and significantly increase endowment. At Homecoming 2001, alumni celebrated the announcement that the campaign had exceeded its goal by raising over ten million dollars.<sup>22</sup>

The graduating class of 1999 received a special treat when Leonard ("Bud") Lomell of the class of 1941 returned to his alma mater to give the commencement address. Lomell's career in World War II was chronicled in Tom Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation*, and he had received the college's Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1998. In his address to the 186 graduates, Lomell credited Tennessee Wesleyan with a large measure of his success. "Tennessee Wesleyan made me a better man, and World War II matured me," he said. A native of Brooklyn, Lomell came to Wesleyan to play football and described the two years he spent in Athens as one of the happiest times of his life. After his graduation from Wesleyan, then a junior college, he joined the U. S. Army Rangers and was decorated for his heroism during the invasion of Normandy. After the war, he used the G. I. bill to resume his education and then built a successful law practice in New Jersey where he now resides. In his commencement address, Lomell advised graduates to continue their education and to give something back to their college and to their communities. "The best of times lie ahead for all of you," he said. "Go for it!" Lomell returned to Athens in May 2001 to receive the honorary degree of Doctor of Law. At the same commencement, the Reverend Mahon Archer was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity.

The youngest person ever to receive a degree at the college's commencement exercises is not known, but it is likely that Voncile Miller is the oldest. At the 2001 commencement, Miller, at age 73, realized a lifelong dream. As a teenager, she had been forced to leave school after junior high because of her family's inability to pay for her books. Some fifty years later, she used funds from her deceased husband's veteran's benefits to finance two years at Hiwassee College. With an associate degree from Hiwassee, she enrolled at Wesleyan in 1997 and, in spite of a bout with cancer, successfully completed requirements for the B. S. degree. Miller humbly credits others for much of her courageous accomplishment. "I am very thankful to Linda Garza and Jim Thompson for all their support," she said. "I especially want to thank Diana Richesin, TWC registrar, for all of her help over the past few years. Dr. Durwood Dunn was also very good about working around my chemo schedule with his class. . . I'll always remember how nice and accepting everyone was of me at Tennessee Wesleyan." After her graduation, Voncile Miller immediately began study for the L.S.A.T.,

the preliminary test required for admittance to law school.<sup>23</sup>

While his responsibilities at the college occupied a major portion of his time, President Dawson was also active in the community and in his church. He was a member of the board of the Y.M.C.A. and of United Way, performed a variety of duties for the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce, and held membership in the Athens Kiwanis Club. As a member of Keith Memorial United Methodist Church, he served on the administrative board. His leadership at the college and in the community was recognized by his being presented the J. Neal Ensminger Man of the Year Award by the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce in 2002.

Not long after Dawson's being named "Man of the Year," rumors began to circulate that he was leaving the college. At the spring meeting of the trustees, he confirmed the rumors by announcing that he had accepted the presidency of Coker College in South Carolina but would remain at T. W. C. until June 30, the end of the academic year. In an interview with Richard Edwards of *The Daily Post-Athenian*, Dawson explained his decision. "You come to a point in your career when you have to make difficult decisions about your future. Mine was driven by age more than anything else." Noting that the average term of a college president was less than seven years, he believed that it was time, at age fifty-seven, for him to move to another position. The newspaper interview was followed by an editorial headed "Dawson Served T.W.C. and Community Well," which praised Dawson's accomplishments during his seven-year tenure.<sup>24</sup>

Following the news of Dawson's resignation, Dr. Shelley Griffith, trustees' chairman, stated that board members were "extremely proud of the service that Dr. Dawson and his wife, Karen, have brought to Tennessee Wesleyan and our community and certainly wish them all the best in their transition and in Dr. Dawson's next assignment." Search for Dawson's successor would begin immediately, said Griffith, with Rebecca Jaquish chairing the search committee.<sup>25</sup>

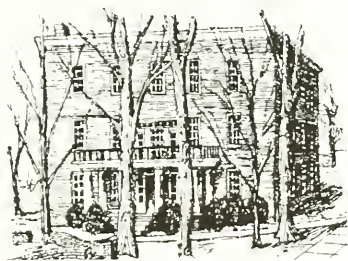
At his final report to the trustees, in April 2000, Dawson urged the board to continue to focus on a balanced budget, alumni donations, and raising both the number of students enrolled and the graduation rate. He also recommended another fundraising campaign near the end of 2007-08 with emphasis on strengthening endowment.<sup>26</sup>

President Dawson presided over his eighth and last commencement exercises in May 2002. Returning to the campus to give the baccalaureate sermon was Dr. Philip Ott, former dean. The Reverend Joe Eldridge, a 1967 graduate and chaplain of American University in Washington, D. C., gave the commencement address.

The numerous achievements of the Dawson presidency included: a more attractive campus, a nursing program and other curriculum additions, growth in enrollment, increased gifts and grants, growth in endowment from four million to twelve million, SACS reaccreditation, and the successful completion of the college's largest capital funds campaign. His successor would find it a challenge to match these achievements.

## CHAPTER 16

### LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: 2002-2007



“Thou who has kept us to this hour  
O keep us faithful to the end.”

- Charles Wesley

After the departure of Dr. James Dawson in June 2002, trustees sought leadership for the college during the interim period before the election of a new president. Such leadership was provided by Dr. Floyd Falany, former president of Reinhardt College, another United Methodist institution in northern Georgia. Since Falany's tenure was expected to be of short duration, he was not assigned full presidential authority but was asked to provide stability and to supervise the college's daily operation. The choice of Falany proved to be a fortunate selection.

When Dr. Falany arrived, the 2002 fall semester was beginning with some key positions unfilled, among them a dean of academic affairs and a leader for institutional advancement. Dr. William Ruleman, chairman of the English department, agreed to act temporarily as academic dean. Falany urged quick attention to filling the position of vice-president for institutional advancement since fundraising seemed to be at a standstill without a single grant proposal filed with a foundation or corporation. While fundraising efforts were stagnant, the enrollment picture was encouraging with the 2002 fall enrollment at its second highest level since 1968. The position of vice-president for institutional advancement was eventually filled by the appointment of Winford Gordon and later of Alan Deusterhaus. Both Gordon and Deusterhaus held the position for a relatively short time. Subsequently, Mathew Pinson was employed to assist the president in fundraising and development.<sup>1</sup>

An experienced fundraiser, Falany saw the need to increase alumni contributions since foundations and corporations offering grants view the level of alumni support as a major criterion in considering their response to a grant proposal. The reasoning is that graduates of an institution are those most able to judge whether it is worthy of support. During his brief tenure, Falany made a strong appeal to alumni to contribute to the college, noting that, on the national average, alumni gifts comprise twenty-eight



percent of donations to a college or university. In his appeal, Falany said, "If America needed Tennessee Wesleyan in 1857, I propose that we need it even more today."<sup>2</sup>

At the November 8 meeting of the trustees, Rebecca Jaquish reported for the presidential search committee, and the nomination of Dr. Thomas Armstrong received board approval. At the same meeting, Dr. Falany announced that he and his wife, Fay, would be leaving in January. Trustees expressed appreciation for Falany's able leadership during the past six months.<sup>3</sup>

As an expression of gratitude and esteem, a 2003 issue of the alumni magazine was dedicated to Floyd and Fay Falany who, according to the dedicatory statement, "have brought honor, wisdom, gracious hospitality, and a sense of stability and well being to our campus community." In an article in the same issue, Falany wrote, "I will never forget that six of the best months of my life were spent on the campus of Tennessee Wesleyan College in Athens, Tennessee."<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Thomas F. Armstrong assumed the presidency in January 2003, arriving from Texas Wesleyan University where he had served as provost, senior vice-president, assistant to the president, and history professor. He earned his B. A. and M. A. degrees from the University of Colorado and his Ph.D. from the University of Virginia. His spouse, Dr. Janice Fennell Armstrong, held B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in library science and had extensive experience as an academic librarian.

Dr. Armstrong was formally inaugurated as Tennessee Wesleyan's nineteenth president in October 2003. Bishop Ray M. Chamberlain, Jr. conducted the installation ceremony, and the inaugural address was given by the Honorable Kay Granger, Texas congresswoman. Representatives from thirty-two colleges and universities included Dr. James Dawson, representing Coker College.

At the April 2004 meeting of the trustees, Dr. Armstrong challenged each board member to donate at least \$1,000 to the annual fund and supplemented his appeal by presenting two \$1,000 checks as his own contribution and that of his wife.<sup>5</sup>

A new program was added to the curriculum when Larry Wallace, former director of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, joined the faculty. A native of Athens, Wallace's distinguished career in law enforcement covered a period of thirty-nine years. At Wesleyan, he began as an adjunct instructor of criminal justice, but his popular courses and student interest in the subject eventually led to the establishment of a major in criminal justice. In addition to his classroom work, Wallace became the college's vice president for external affairs in 2005.

Three days after the college's 147th commencement in May 2004, President Armstrong stated in an interview published in *The Daily Post-Athenian* that he would soon be leaving his position. "There is an ongoing discussion with the executive committee of the board of trustees," he said, "which indicates that my service to Tennessee Wesleyan may end on June 30, 2004." Neither Armstrong nor the trustees' chairperson, Dr. Lillian Cook, offered specifics about the "ongoing discussion."<sup>6</sup>

On May 13, a news release from the executive committee announced the resignation of President Armstrong to be effective on June 30. The release quoted Dr.

Lillian Cook as saying, "We appreciate the service Dr. Armstrong has given to T.W.C. and the community. We wish Dr. Armstrong and his wife, Jan, all the best in their new endeavor." Cook also stated that a presidential search committee would begin work immediately.<sup>7</sup>

In a separate statement provided to the newspaper, Dr. Armstrong explained his resignation as being due to a difference in his vision of the college's future from that of some trustees. His vision, he said, "was endorsed by the full board of trustees through their approval of the school's planning premises at its April meeting," but his ideas "differed from (those of) members of the executive committee of the board of trustees." He did not offer details about the two differing viewpoints.<sup>8</sup>

The executive committee again turned to Dr. Floyd Falany who agreed to serve as interim president, this time for one year with full presidential authority. Even before he assumed this office, Falany was asked by Bishop Chamberlain to represent Tennessee Wesleyan at the Holston Annual Conference. Upon their return to T.W.C., the Falanys received a warm welcome from the college community because of strong ties formed during his previous brief tenure.<sup>9</sup>

Another cause for rejoicing was the announcement of a \$1.5 million gift from the estate of Dr. Paul F. Dishner. The large donation was somewhat surprising since neither Dishner nor any member of his family had attended the college. Dr. Sam Neeley, a trustee and Dishner's cousin, earlier had arranged a meeting of his cousin with President Dawson. Dishner apparently was impressed with Dawson's presentation of the college's needs and its potential for greater service.<sup>10</sup>

Anna Gambel, sister of Dr. Dishner, attended the formal presentation and spoke of the gift as "a demonstration of his love of education and the belief that everyone should have the benefit of higher learning." Born into a poor but hardworking family, Dishner had obtained his education in spite of limited funds, graduating from the University of Tennessee Medical School and later both practicing medicine and teaching aspiring physicians. In addition to his final generous donation, Dishner previously had given T. W. C. an apartment complex in Kingsport and other monetary contributions.<sup>11</sup>

Wesleyan discovered another friend and generous donor upon the graduation of its student government president in 2003. After the graduation of Will Purushotham, his grandfather, Dr. William R. Bennett, gave \$10,000 to the college in appreciation of its role in Will's education and in his leadership development. A distinguished educator with a Ph. D. in economics, Bennett had retired from the University of Alabama after thirty-three years of service. He asked that his gift be used to fund leadership opportunities for other students. The proud grandfather said, "Will had done so much and loved the school. I wanted to thank the school. Also I would be delighted to be a professor at a school like Tennessee Wesleyan." After graduation, Will Purushotham worked as a youth minister in Alabama before returning to T. W. C. as an admissions counselor.<sup>12</sup>

Another unexpected gift came from the estate of Irene Wilson. Pete and Irene

Wilson owned Wilson's Jewelry in downtown Athens near the college. Over a number of years, faculty, staff, and students frequently shopped there. Students often sought the Wilsons' advice when looking for a special gift for a special person and sometimes even bought engagement and wedding rings. Members of the college community became an extended family for the Wilsons. Irene Wilson survived her husband and upon her death in 2003, left a bequest of approximately \$500,000 to the college.<sup>13</sup>

Interim President Falany was pleased to be on the campus when Tennessee Wesleyan was recognized as one of "America's Best Small Colleges" by Institutional Research and Evaluation, Inc., an independent consulting organization specializing in higher education research. Commenting on the distinction, Falany said, "Everyone on this campus is dedicated to excellence, so we know what a great college it is. With this recognition, people across the nation will have a chance to hear about the college and the unique experience it gives to students."

National recognition also came to Stan Harrison when he was named the 2003-04 NAIA National Athletics Director of the Year. After coming to T. W. C. in 1982 as women's basketball coach, Harrison had led teams of Lady Bulldogs to more than four hundred wins, six conference championships, and competition in five national tournaments. As the college's athletics director, he added three women's and two men's varsity sports. His concern for academics as well as athletics has played a large part in the remarkable graduation rate for student athletes of more than eighty-five percent.<sup>14</sup>

Several well-deserved awards were presented at Homecoming 2004, but one was particularly appropriate. Rachel Cochran received the Robbie J. Ensminger Friend of Wesleyan Award in recognition of her many years of dedicated service. Cochran has been a tireless and generous supporter of the college since 1979 when she first joined the board of trustees. In 1984, her support had been recognized when she was awarded the honorary Doctor of Humanities degree.<sup>15</sup>

A highlight of the 2004-05 school year for the college choir was a trip to Germany to perform for soldiers based there. The fifty-voice group, under the leadership of Director Keith Wheeler, traveled to Ramstein, Germany, where the Ramstein Air Base contains the largest community of Americans outside the United States. The base's hospital houses most of the injured soldiers evacuated from war zones in the Middle East and other areas. The choir's "Yellow Ribbon Tour," in May 2005, gave Wesleyan students not only an exciting travel experience but an opportunity to display support for the brave men and women who defend our country and the cause of freedom.<sup>16</sup>

Susan Buttram, director of alumni affairs, retired in the spring of 2005 after seventeen years of service. A 1967 graduate, Buttram ably performed the many duties of her office, one of her greatest accomplishments being the production of an extremely attractive magazine. During Buttram's tenure the publication was called *The Tennessee Wesleyan College Alumni Magazine*, but shortly before her retirement, she offered to

alumni a contest to select a new title. The contest's winner was James E. Heath of the Class of 1949 who suggested the name *Arches*. According to Heath, the campus arches are "a part of our past, present, and future." He recalled his student days when the arches were "a favorite spot to meet and gossip." The arches recently had been restored by the class of 1950 and were dedicated at Homecoming 2005.<sup>17</sup>

Following Susan Buttram's retirement, Cindy Runyan of the class of 1994 was appointed director of alumni and family relations. Recently Runyan has added to her other responsibilities work with the 150th anniversary committee which is planning the sesquicentennial celebration.<sup>18</sup>

Retiring at the end of the spring 2004 semester was Gary Long, an able and popular professor of mathematics.

Dr. William Ruleman, returned to the classroom in 2005, having served as academic dean since 2002. Dr. Suzanne Hine, chair of the education department, was appointed to the dean's position. Hine holds a master of arts degree and doctoral degree in education from U. T. Knoxville. Prior to coming to Wesleyan, she had served as vice-president and dean at Tusculum College.

Tennessee Wesleyan's twentieth president, Dr. Stephen Condon, did not just "arrive" in June 2005; he zoomed in and "hit the ground running." His supply of seemingly inexhaustible energy has led to such descriptions as "human dynamo" and "a jolt of electricity." All signs point to his being an administrator who can lead Tennessee Wesleyan to new heights of achievement.

Dr. Condon gives credit to his wife, Becky, and to Dr. Floyd Falany, a person he looked up to at Reinhardt College, as the persons who encouraged him to assume his present position. During his last year at Reinhardt, he had decided to seek a new career path and had two options, either to work as vice-chancellor at a large university or as the president of a small college. Dr. Falany spoke glowingly of Tennessee Wesleyan, and when the Condons visited Athens, Mrs. Condon liked the campus atmosphere. After an interview with the presidential search committee, chaired by Fred Womack, the Condons returned to Georgia and "left it in God's hands." In April, Condon received the call he had hoped for, a call from the trustees offering him the presidency.<sup>19</sup>

President Condon's educational background includes a bachelor's degree from Boston Teachers College, a master's degree from Florida State University, an education specialist degree from the University of Alabama, and a Ph. D. from the University of Mississippi. He continued his studies at Harvard for post-doctoral work in educational management. His valuable employment experience consists of seventeen years of administrative positions at United Methodist colleges in the southeast, including Huntington College, Lumbuth University, and Reinhardt College. His wife, Becky, is a professional librarian currently employed at Vonore Elementary School. The Condons are the parents of Curtis, who works in computer sales, and Alexis, a college senior.

At his first meeting with trustees in October 2005, President Condon stated that



he did not wish a formal inauguration. Perhaps the energetic administrator felt that he could not spare the time! He also informed the trustees that Dr. Jack Bowling had given his house in the Pikwatina subdivision to the college. Since that time, the college has received another gift of a residence on Highland Avenue from Dr. Milnor and Miriam Jones.<sup>20</sup>

Since becoming president, Dr. Condon has focused his attention on three areas: fundraising, which he sees as his primary task; increased enrollment; and renovation and construction projects. In order to concentrate on these three areas, he entrusted responsibility for the college's daily operation to the senior staff. Senior staff members include: Dr. Suzanne Hine, vice-president for academic affairs; Stan Harrison, vice-president for enrollment management; Larry Wallace, vice-president for external affairs; Martha Chambers, vice-president for financial affairs; and Scott Mashburn, vice-president for student life.

President Condon has taken the Wesleyan story on the road as he has talked with alumni, business leaders, and foundation officials. During his first full year as president, gifts increased from \$500,000 during the previous year to 1.3 million in 2005-06. The 2006-2007 campaign for community funding also hit a new high as contributions from area businesses nearly doubled as compared to the 2005-06 fiscal period. Leading this successful campaign were Shirley Woodcock of Sweetwater Oil Company, Jack Allen of Citizens National Bank, Carter Runyan of Jackson and Runyan Accountants, and Ross Dodson of Athens Housing Authority.<sup>21</sup>

Condon's second area of concern, enrollment, also peaked. The 2006 fall enrollment reached 881, the highest level in the history of the college and topping the 879 record set in 1966. Condon anticipates that enrollment will reach 900 in the fall of 2007, moving close to the goal of 1,000.<sup>22</sup>

No one passing by the campus today can be unaware that something is happening at Tennessee Wesleyan, for major physical changes are quite evident. Shortly after Condon's arrival, a million-dollar renovation of Centennial Hall was undertaken. Built in 1957 as a residence hall for men, Centennial had fallen into disrepair and, for safety reasons, the building was closed and blocked off by a fence. The renovated building, completed in 2006 was renamed Elliott Hall in January 2007 in honor of the Elliott Family- Colonel John B. and Mary Ada Adams Elliott, and their sons Drannon Z. ("Zig"), Hershel A., Kenneth M. and John B. ("Buck"). The facility houses the art and business departments. The Elliott brothers had grown up in Athens and attended Wesleyan during the time of the great depression, studying chemical engineering. Kenneth subsequently worked in Dallas as a research engineer for Mobil Oil. As an alumnus and a former long term member of the board of trustees, Kenneth Elliott has been a generous supporter of Wesleyan.

Elliott Hall was further enhanced by the addition of the Thomas B. Mayfield Loggia and Courtyard located in front of the building. The Mayfield name has been long associated with Tennessee Wesleyan. Thomas Mayfield and his brother, Scott, took a small milk and ice cream processing plant, started by their father, and devel-

oped it into one of the leading dairy businesses of the southeastern United States. Both Tom and Scott attended Wesleyan, as did their mother, Goldie Denton Mayfield, as did Tom's wife, Regenia, and as did Tom and Regenia's son, Bill. Bill's daughter, Lindsey, will enter as a freshman in the fall of 2007. Tom Mayfield received an honorary doctorate in 1983, and Regenia was awarded an honorary doctorate in music in May 2006. Landscaping of the courtyard is to be completed by the date of the 150th anniversary celebration.

Construction of Wesley Commons is in progress and is to contain one hundred student apartments. The apartment complex, a six-million-dollar project, is located behind Banfield-Durham Hall, the Merner-Pfeiffer Library, and Fisher Hall of Science in the northwestern area of the former athletic field. It is expected to be ready for occupancy at the beginning of the 2007-08 school year.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to the new building and the renovation of Elliott Hall, major improvements recently have been made in the Sherman dining hall, the Merner-Pfeiffer Library, Fowler Hall and Keith Hall.

An aesthetic contribution to the campus grounds, the Nocatula Garden, was in progress before President Condon's arrival. The class of 1953 planned and partially funded the project, soliciting additional funds from other alumni and friends. Located in front of the library, the garden contains an arrangement of plants native to East Tennessee, symbolizing Nocatula and her Cherokee heritage. Another portion of the area is devoted to a formal English garden, representing the British soldier who was Nocatula's lover and who was given the Cherokee name Conestoga. Ailene Everett Chambers, class of 1965, commissioned the bronze statue of Nocatula which is the centerpiece of the garden. The statue and the garden were dedicated during Homecoming 2006.<sup>24</sup>

Six new tennis courts with modern lighting, a key-card entry system, and a protective fence will be ready for use by the fall semester of 2007-08. Fall 2007 will also see the addition of a new college sport, lacrosse. A student parking lot is under construction on the site of the old practice school which has been razed. Other construction projects are in the planning stage.

While noting the exciting changes taking place on the campus, one's thoughts turn to those good friends of the college who are no longer here to view, at least from an earthly position, signs of progress which would be for them a source of pride and rejoicing.

Maynard ("Brody") Ellis died in March 2003. Following the example of his father, Ellis attended Wesleyan in the 1940s and never lost his interest in or love of the college. He served on the president's advisory council, on the alumni board, and as a valuable trustee who offered wise counsel, especially on financial matters. A member of Keith Memorial United Methodist Church, he never let his fellow members forget their responsibility to the college, encouraging scholarships and generous donations from the church. In recognition of his years of staunch support, the college had honored him with an honorary degree and with a Friend of Wesleyan Award.<sup>25</sup>

Ed Eldridge died in March 2006. His love of Wesleyan began in 1935 when he enrolled as a freshman and earned his tuition by working in the kitchen and dining room at Petty-Manker. A United Methodist minister, he served on the board of trustees from 1954 to 2006 and established a scholarship to assist deserving students. According to his son, Eldridge never missed a trustees' meeting. At the May 2006 commencement exercises, son John Eldridge accepted the Harry Steadman Award, given for outstanding service to the college and to the United Methodist Church, on behalf of his late father.

William ("Bill") Sullins died in November 2006. A local optometrist and civic leader, Sullins served as a college trustee almost continuously from 1953 until the time of his death. He was active in fundraising, a generous donor, and a thoughtful advisor. In recognition of his long and devoted service, he had been granted the honorary degree Doctor of Humane Letters, and the trustees' boardroom is named in his honor.<sup>26</sup>

Another long-time trustee, Hugh M. Willson died in the spring of 2007. Chairman of Citizens National Bank, Willson was an active, loyal, and generous supporter of the college and of civic causes. In 2006, a luncheon was hosted by Willson and son Paul in honor of the more than forty Tennessee Wesleyan graduates employed by Citizens National Bank. At the luncheon, President Condon was given a check which represented the largest single gift received during the 2005-06 fund campaign.<sup>27</sup>

Two other recently deceased friends of the college must be mentioned, Kenneth Higgins and Chancellor Earl Henley. Higgins was an alumnus, long served as secretary of the trustees, and was one of his alma mater's strongest supporters. Henley promoted the cause of higher education through his chairmanship of the Holston Conference Colleges Board of Governors and through his faithful support of Tennessee Wesleyan. Higgins received the honorary degree Doctor of Laws in 1981, and Henley also was named Doctor of Laws in 1984.

The end of the 2005-06 school year saw the retirement of Jim ("Mr. T") Thompson, associate professor of sociology, after thirty-five years of service. Praised by his colleagues and by his students for his kindness, his concern for others, and for his willingness to listen, as well as for his sound scholarship, Thompson has been involved with academics, athletics, the United Methodist Church, and the community. As a volunteer to the athletic department, he ensured that all student athletes met eligibility requirements. In recognition of his service to college and community, Athens Mayor John Profitt, Jr., proclaimed April 27, 2006, "Jim Thompson Day."<sup>28</sup>

As this history comes to a close, the college is already celebrating its 150th anniversary, a celebration to be climaxed by a number of events planned for Homecoming 2007. The first commemorative event came in April 2007 with the appearance of the T.W.C. logo on Mayfield Dairy's half-gallon cartons of classic vanilla ice cream. Since seven million such cartons will be marketed in nine states between April and October, Wesleyan's sesquicentennial will be widely publicized. Mayfield's general manager, Mary Farmer Williams, daughter of Coach Farmer, said of this action, "We're proud

of Tennessee Wesleyan, and we believe the college is doing some amazing things these days.”<sup>29</sup>

At the May 2007 commencement exercises, held in the Nocatula Garden area, members of the centennial class of 1957 joined the class of 2007 in the academic procession, and each received a golden anniversary certificate and a medallion.

Listed below are members of the anniversary committee who are working hard to make 2007 an exciting year.

Becky Jaquish, *chair*

Bill Akins, Brandi Armstrong, Matt Brookshire, Susan Buttram, John Carroll, Elaine Cathcart, Anne Catron, David Duncan, Ashley Edwards, Robbie Enslinger, Joy Futrell, Nicole Gibbs, Katie Goins, Danny Hays, the Reverend Mike Hubble, Diane Hutsell, Amy Jackson, Anna Lee, Jo Lundy, Blake McCaslin, Jane Moore, Dick Pelley, Bo Perkinson, Mat Pinson, Derek Pirtle, Rob Preston, Don Reid, Cindy Runyan, Angie Wilcox, Larry Wallace, Gen. Fred Womack.

Thousands of alumni and visitors are expected to converge on the campus in October. Among the events planned are: The Alumni Golf Tournament, a country music concert featuring Phil Vassar, The Grascals and Just Us, an alumni/student choir performance, dedication ceremonies for Elliott Hall and Wesley Commons, a Hall of Fame reunion, a contemporary Christian concert, Greek reunion, and a concert in late October by renowned vocalist Amy Grant, and much more. Could the 1857 founders of Athens Female College ever have imagined such a celebration?

One event, a drama on the Nocatula story, directed by Pat Sutherland, drama professor, has been postponed due to her untimely death in September 2007. Held in high esteem by colleagues and students alike, her passing greatly impacted the entire college community.

Tennessee Wesleyan College has come a long way since its humble beginning in 1857. From an initial enrollment of seventy students, a three-story building, five faculty members, including the president, and a campus consisting of two acres, it has grown to nearly 900 students, around 200 faculty and staff personnel, 21 buildings, and a campus consisting of forty acres. However, the greatest test of its success is not in enrollment figures, buildings or size of campus; but rather the measure of its success is in the 150-year record of its alumni. Therein lie thousands of success stories. As an institution of Christian higher education, Tennessee Wesleyan has both suffered much and achieved much. Long may it live!



## APPENDIX A

### Tennessee Wesleyan College 1946 BULLDOGS

**C.Q. Smith, Head Coach**

**J. A. Brooks, Line Coach**

<b>Ends</b>	<b>Hometown</b>	<b>Ht.</b>	<b>Wt.</b>	<b>Class</b>
J. B. Adams	Athens	6'	175	Freshman
Cecil Sparkman	Gate City, Va.	6'	180	Freshman
Matt Marion	Etowah	5'11"	180	Freshman
Jack Pemberton	Rockwood	5'11"	165	Freshman
Jason Baker	Lenoir City	6'	180	Freshman
Harry Fetzinger	Jacksonville, Fla.	6'	160	Freshman
Jack Carr	Chattanooga	6'	170	Freshman
Charles Hood	Chattanooga	5'9"	165	Freshman

#### **Tackles**

Bob Allen	Etowah	5'11"	200	Freshman
Ken Kuhnert	Bergen Field, N.J.	5'10"	190	Freshman
F. A. Bishop	Chattanooga	6'3"	190	Freshman
Harry Goins	Gadsden, Ala.	6'1"	190	Freshman
John McMilliam	Athens	6'	200	Freshman
Ken Colston	Whitwell	6'	190	Freshman
C. Scott Mayfield	Athens	6'2"	230	Freshman

#### **Guards**

Tom Pemberton	Rockwood	6'	180	Freshman
Harold Anderson	Jacksonville, Fla.	5'9"	160	Freshman
Ed West	Chattanooga	5'9"	160	Freshman
C. W. Pemberton	Rockwood	5'11"	185	Freshman
Charles Davis	Jacksonville, Fla.	6'	180	Freshman
A. E. Burger	Englewood	5'8"	160	Freshman

<b>Centers</b>	<b>Hometown</b>	<b>Ht.</b>	<b>Wt.</b>	<b>Class</b>
Harold Hall	Rossville, Ga.	5'10"	180	Freshman
Raymond McCombs	Jacksonville, Ga.	6'	180	Freshman
Gene Williams	Chattanooga	5'10"	160	Freshman
Gene Montgomery	Chattanooga	5'9"	170	Freshman

<b>QB</b>				
Bill Eggart	Westfield, N.Y.	5'9"	160	Freshman
Jess Barclay	Etowah	6'1"	190	Freshman
John Allen	Jacksonville, Fla.	5'10"	185	Freshman

<b>LHB</b>				
Bobby Jumper	Chattanooga	5'6"	150	Freshman
Bill Rogers	Chester, Va.	5'8"	155	Freshman
Charles Burger	Englewood	5'9"	170	Freshman
Birdie Smith	Athens	6'1"	160	Freshman
Bill Aiken	Whitwell	5'9"	160	Freshman

<b>RHB</b>				
Blackie Blackley	Chester, Va.	5'10"	160	Freshman
Bill Long	Rockwood	6'	180	Freshman
T. N. Jones	Vonore	5'7"	155	Freshman
Wess Barker	Etowah	5'11"	185	Freshman
Russ Godwin	Hastings, Fla.	6'1"	190	Freshman

<b>Full Backs</b>				
Burleigh Davis		5'10"	180	Freshman
Ken Brakebill	Athens	6'	160	Freshman
Leroy Anderson	Notia	6'	170	Freshman

## APPENDIX B

### Honorary Degrees Awarded By Tennessee Wesleyan

1957	Joseph A. Hardin	Doctor of Divinity
	Mark Malcolm Moore	Doctor of Divinity
	Clyde Fristoe Watkins	Doctor of Divinity
	Muriel Day	Doctor of Humane Letters
	Myron Forrest Wicke	Doctor of Literature
	Roy Hunter Short	Doctor of Literature
	James Lindsay Robb	Doctor of Pedagogy
	Zeboim Lupton Patten	Doctor of Laws
1958	Ben B. St. Clair	Doctor of Divinity
	Edward W. Seay	Doctor of Laws
1959	R. R. Kramer	Doctor of Laws
	LeRoy A. Martin	Doctor of Laws
	Gilbert Govan	Doctor of Literature
1960	C.L. Hardwick	Doctor of Humane Letters
	Farris Farmer Moore	Doctor of Divinity
	Gunnar Johan Teilmann, Jr.	Doctor of Divinity
1961	R. Frank Porter	Doctor of Divinity
	Marquis J. Triplett	Doctor of Divinity
	Henry W. Durham	Doctor of Humane Letters
	Stanley F. Bretske	Doctor of Humane Letters
1962	Edgar A. Eldridge	Doctor of Divinity
	John C. Hodges	Doctor of Literature
	David Alexander Lockmiller	Doctor of Humanities
1963	Mrs. H.C. (Ethel Fellows) Black	Doctor of Humane Letters
	Arthur H. Jones	Doctor of Divinity

1964	Samuel Robinette Dodson, Jr. Newell Dindom Ellison Robert Lyndon Wilcox	Doctor of Divinity Doctor of Jurisprudence Doctor of Divinity
9-4-64	Ernest Jennings Ford	Doctor of Music
1965	Leon Edward Hickman Alfred Dudley Ward	Doctor of Business Administration Doctor of Divinity
9-17-65	Homer Ellis Finger, Jr.	Doctor of Sacred Theology
1970	James Stevenson Franks	Doctor of Humane Letters
1972	Grover Cleveland Graves Walter Luke Pickering Hendrix Atkinson Townsley Raymon Elbert White	Doctor of Laws Doctor of Divinity Doctor of Humane Letters Doctor of Divinity
1973	James Neal Ensminger James Spurgeon McCartt Maurice Clifton Smith William David Sullins	Doctor of Journalism Doctor of Divinity Doctor of Education Doctor of Humanities
1974	Richard Kyle Tomlinson Nyles Conway Ayers	Doctor of Divinity Doctor of Humanities
1976	Carl Milton Bennett Floyd Edgar Bowling Jackson Carlisle Kramer	Doctor of Business Administration Doctor of Science Doctor of Laws
1977	Joseph T. Frye, Jr. Donald B. Trauger E. Heisse Johnson	Doctor of Public Service Doctor of Science Doctor of Humanities



1978	N. Allen Birtwhistle James Rollin Green Carl Boggess Honaker Joe W. Wimberly	Doctor of Divinity Doctor of Divinity Doctor of Science Doctor of Public Service
1979	Samuel Henry Neeley, Jr. Fred Puett James Bright Wilson	Doctor of Public Service Doctor of Laws Doctor of Humane Letters
1980	Wilma Dykeman Stokely Jean Hawk Troy John Norman Tyler	Doctor of Humane Letters Doctor of Humanities Doctor of Science
1981	Kenneth D. Higgins Wilmer B. Robbins Paul M. Starnes	Doctor of Laws Doctor of Divinity Doctor of Humane Letters
1982	Gary M. Burchett James Monroe Ball, Jr. H. Maynard "Brody" Ellis A. B. Goddard	Doctor of Public Service Doctor of Divinity Doctor of Public Service Doctor of Laws
1983	Marvin Bishop Gass Jack Donald King, Sr. Thomas Brient Mayfield Nell Webb Mohney	Doctor of Divinity Doctor of Divinity Doctor of Commercial Science Doctor of Humane Letters
1984	Rachel Nall Cochran William C. Grater Earl Hornsby Henley	Doctor of Humanities Doctor of Humanities Doctor of Laws

1985	S.B. Rymer, Jr.	Doctor of Business Administration
	Lawrence A. Roseberry	Doctor of Public Service
	Richard H. Timberlake	Doctor of Divinity
1986	Ronald J. Garst	Doctor of Humane Letters
	C. Scott Mayfield	Doctor of Public Service
	Ray E. Robinson	Doctor of Divinity
	W.E. Nash	Doctor of Humane Letters
1987	Toombs Hodges Kay, Jr.	Doctor of Divinity
	John James Duncan	Doctor of Laws
	Morris David Goodfriend	Doctor of Public Service
	John Martin Jones	Doctor of Humane Letters
	Washington Irving Farmer	Doctor of Divinity
1988	Johnnie Dodson Guthrie	Doctor of Letters
	Wallace Wayne Shirley	Doctor of Public Service
	Carroll Hardy Long	Doctor of Humanities
	Dan Buford Kelly	Doctor of Divinity
1989	Billy L. Akins	Doctor of Humane Letters
	Mary Edwards Kirby	Doctor of Humanities
	Robert Wade Walker	Doctor of Divinity
1990	Curtis Allen	Doctor of Public Service
	Alice Weihe Lockmiller	Doctor of Humanities
	Clay E. Lee	Doctor of Letters
1991	Charles A. "Z" Buda, Jr.	Doctor of Public Service
	H. Eddie Fox	Doctor of Divinity
	W. David Lewis	Doctor of Divinity

1992	C. Gilbert Wrenn John W. Litton Ronald E. Ingram	Doctor of Letters Doctor of Public Service Doctor of Divinity
1993	Martha Callahan Paul Y. Marchbanks Charles C. Redfern	Doctor of Humane Letters Doctor of Divinity Doctor of Public Service
2000	Freeman S. Deutsch	Doctor of Humane Letters
2001	Mahan Archer Leonard G. Lomell	Doctor of Divinity Doctor of Laws
2002	Charles Neal	Doctor of Divinity
2004	Congresswoman Kay Granger	Doctor of Humane Letters
2006	Regenia L. Mayfield	Doctor of Music

## APPENDIX C

### J. Neal Ensminger Distinguished Alumnus Award Winners

1967/68	J. Neal Ensminger '31	1990	Annabell S. Hartman '35
1969/70	James L. Robb '04	1991	Charles E. Peavyhouse '49
1974	Russell J. Godwin '48	1992	Fred D. Womack '63
1975	Maude Smith '14	1993	C. Stephen Byrum '69
1976	C. Scott Mayfield '48	1994	John C. Thornton '75
1977	James S. Franks '32	1995	Evelyn Meadows Laycock '45
1978	Hester Robb McCray '28	1996	Harold N. Powers '48
1979	Astor L. Jenkins '35	1997	Edgar A. Eldridge '37
1980	Paul M. Starnes '57	1997	Joseph T. Eldridge '67
1981	Evelyn Bryan Johnson '29	1998	Leonard G. Lomell '41
1982	Alice Weihe Lockmiller '30	1999	William B. Kilbride '72
1983	Joseph A. Brake, Sr. '43	2000	Kenneth M. Elliott '40
1983	George W. Oliphant '43	2001	Robert C. Joines '61
1984	Edward E. Baker '35	2002	John M. Withers '57
1985	Curtis R. Schofield '59	2003	Carl E. "Sonny" Tarpley Jr. '64
1986	R. Marion Robb '35	2004	James E. Davis '57
1987	James E. Heiskell '37	2005	Lynn Banner Nicholas '76
1988	Harry W. Sherman '59	2006	Sara Jo Bardsley '49
1989	Clyde B. Webb '60		



## APPENDIX D

### Lockmillier Teacher of the Year Award Recipients

1987-1988	Ed Cox
1988-1989	Tom Oneal
1989-1990	Sam Roberts
1990-1991	David Duncan
1991-1992	David Duncan
1992-1993	Sam Roberts
1993-1994	Bob Barnett
1994-1995	Bob Barnett
1995-1996	Durwood Dunn
1996-1997	Sandra Clariday
1997-1998	Jean Stevenson
1998-1999	Stephen Herr
1999-2000	Travis Hayes
2000-2001	Gary Long
2001-2002	Durwood Dunn
2002-2003	William McDonald
2003-2004	Grant Willhite
2004-2005	Suzanne Hine
2005-2006	Lynne Gylani
2006-2007	Allen Moore

## APPENDIX E

### Hall of Fame List

#### 1979

Miles W. Proudfoot  
Reuben N. McCray  
Rankin M. Hudson  
Forest H. Kendall  
Swann B. Boyer

#### 1980

Frank M. Ditmore  
M. C. "Tip" Smith  
Ray Graves  
Willard "Easy" Eaves  
Jones C. Beene III

#### 1981

C. Scott Mayfield  
W. Glen Michaels  
Hooper Eblen  
J. Van B. Coe  
Robert C. Davis

#### 1982

Pat Kerr Sharp  
William H. Browder  
J. B. "Ace" Adams  
Glenn C. "Mutt" Knox  
C.Q. Smith

#### 1983

Kenneth D. Higgins  
Ronnie Knight  
A.H. "Buck" Hatcher  
Warren McGhee  
Gene Mehaffey

#### 1984

H. Ray Lamb  
Ronald T. Campbell  
John O. Saylor  
William L. Marks  
Bobby A. Ferguson

#### 1985

Jerry Edmonds  
Dwain Farmer  
Grace Coates Keith  
Dick LaFrance  
Pete Wilson

#### 1986

Tom Pemberton  
Randy Vernon  
Donald Dodgen

#### 1987

Troy Giles  
Geneva W. Rutherford  
Floyd "Jack" Bowling  
Johnny Morgan  
Melvin "Bucky" Reynolds

#### 1988

William B. Cate  
W. Wesley Barker  
Charles J. Liner  
F. Jean Biddle  
Victor W. Maddox

#### 1989

Charles C. Pangle  
George Wilson  
Robbie Ensminger  
J. LeBron Bell  
Donald B. Reid

#### 1990

Edwin F. Saxman, Jr.  
Regenia Lawson Mayfield  
B. James Hoggatt  
Charles E. McBroom

#### 1991

Don F. Patrick  
Bob F. Stephenson  
Jack A. Prince  
H.L. "Sticky" Davis, Jr.

#### 1992

Stan Harrison  
Charles W. Smith  
D. A. Jack Henderson

**1993**

Aaron Thomas Grant  
 Marietta Blackburn  
 Henderson  
 Michael B. Ridley  
 Paul H. Williams

**1994**

W. Raymond Barr  
 H. Alex Williams  
 Buster E. "Buck" Brown

**1995**

Kelley E. Aldridge  
 Gene E. Rutledge  
 Jane Blair "Dana" Higgins  
 Debbie Park Corley  
 W. Elmer Raper

**1996**

Art D. Goon  
 Jack A. Carr  
 Lee "Doak" Willett  
 Joe Crabtree  
 Tim Rader

**1997**

Mike A. Poe  
 Missy Elrod Murphy  
 Russell J. Godwin  
 Chris R. Cattaneo  
 Carl E. Shivers

**1998**

Mildred Stephenson  
 Pemberton  
 Wayne Norfleet  
 Randy Reed  
 John R. Mitchell  
 Jack Garner

**1999**

Wayne C. Penniman  
 Joe L. McKenry, Jr.  
 James W. Thompson

**2000**

Michael Jordan  
 Diane Jack Freeman  
 Pepe Fernandez  
 Amy Lackey Oliver

**2001**

Jim Davis  
 Teresa Sherrill Duncan  
 John "Buck" Mitchell  
 Beth Parham Ricker  
 Ralph White

**2002**

Stacy Hutsell  
 Jeff Geeter  
 Gilbert McDowell  
 Mike Olinger  
 Conn Comerford

**2003**

Mike Policastro  
 Ezell Scruggs  
 Karen Campbell Wild  
 Jim Dodson

**2004**

Troy Fugatt  
 Dick Anderson  
 Boyd Woody  
 Boyd Reynolds  
 Neale C. Hoskins

**2005**

Lewis C. "Pee Wee" Bivens  
 Michael Bowling  
 Anthony F. Lotti  
 Burkett L. Witt  
 Ronald R. Woods

**2006**

Jason Powell  
 Becky Bass Stone  
 Paul Barnett Webb

# NOTES

## Chapter 1

1. Odd Fellows originated in eighteenth century England among industrial workers and was designed to provide financial relief to members in dire circumstances and to furnish them with a proper burial. The first Odd Fellows lodge in the United States was established in Baltimore, Maryland, which became the national headquarters for lodges throughout the country. According to the *Athens Post* of March 9, 1855, the McMinn lodge was established in 1850 and was one of more than 3000 lodges in the United States with some 204,000 members.
2. *Rowley v. Athens Female College*, 25 August 1865, in McMinn County Chancellor Court Records, Athens, Tennessee.
3. LeRoy A. Martin, *A History of Tennessee Wesleyan College: 1857-1957* (U. S. A., 1957), 6.
4. John Longwith, *Light Upon a Hill: The University of Chattanooga, 1886-1996* (Chattanooga, 2000), 5-6.
5. *Public Acts of the State of Tennessee, Thirty-Second General Assembly, 1857-1858* (Nashville, 1858), 210-211.
6. *Athens Post*, 14 May 1858.
7. *Ibid.*, 10 September 1858.
8. *Ibid.*, 13 August 1858.
9. *Athens Female College Catalogue, 1860*.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Athens Post*, 3 December 1858.
12. *Ibid.*, 25 March 1858.
13. *Ibid.*, 30 August 1861.
14. *Minutes of the Holston Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, 19-23 October 1862; *Athens Post*, 10 April 1863; Bill Akins and Kenneth Langley, *Torn Apart: McMinn County, Tennessee During the Civil War* (Etowah, 2006), 84.



15. R. N. Price, *Holston Methodism from Its Origin to the Present*, (Nashville, 1913), IV 348; Isaac Patton Martin; *History of Methodism in Holston Conference* (Nashville, 1944), 95; Minutes of the Circuit Court of McMinn County, December 11, 1871, in Sally DeWitt Ealy, Fred William Saceman, and Marynell Royal Graves, *A History of Keith Memorial United Methodist Church, 1824-1984* (Athens, 1985), 13.
16. *Athens Post*, 22 August 1862; Akins and Langley, *Torn Apart*, 78.
17. *Journal of the Holston Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, October 3, 1867, contains reference to action taken by the 1866 Conference, which is missing from the TWC Archives.
18. *Rowley v. Athens Female College*.

## **Chapter 2**

1. M. R. M. Burke, "A Brief History of Grant Memorial University," in the *Athens Post*, 11 May 1904; *Journal of the Holston Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 3 October 1867.
2. John McClure Sharp, *Recollections and Hearsays of Athens: Fifty Years and Beyond* (Athens, 1933), 26.
3. *Journal of Holston Conference*, 3 October 1867.
4. *Ibid.*, 8 October 1868.
5. LeRoy A. Martin, *A History of Tennessee Wesleyan College, 1857-1957* (U. S. A., 1957), 43.
6. *Journal of Holston Conference*, 7 October 1869.
7. *Ibid.*, 3 October 1870.
8. *Ibid.*, 11 October 1871.
9. *Ibid.*, 2 October 1872.
10. David A. Bolton, "An Autobiography" in Martin, *History*, 248-280.
11. *Ibid.*, 37; *Journal of Holston Conference*, 1 October 1873.
12. Quoted in Martin, *History*, 40,41; *Journal of Holston Conference*, 20-24 October 1880.
13. Martin, *History*, 41-42.

14. David A. Bolton unpublished manuscript, Glenn Archival Room, Merner-Pfeiffer Library.
15. *History of Trinity United Methodist Church, 1824-1983* (n. a.), 2-3; *Journal of Holston Conference*, 19-23 October 1882; Sally DeWitt Ealy, Fred Sauceman, and Marynelle Royal Graves, *A History of Keith Memorial United Methodist Church, 1824-1984* (Athens, 1985), 13.
16. Martin, *History*, 41.
17. *East Tennessee Wesleyan Catalogue, 1881-82*; Memoirs of James Alexander Fowler, Book 2, 32, Glenn Archival Room.
18. Fowler Memoirs, Book 2, 32; Bolton Autobiography.
19. Fowler Memoirs, Book 2, 34, 39-40.
20. Martin, *History*, 181.
21. Faculty Minutes, 1 March 1869, 8 March 1869.
22. *Ibid.*, 8 March 1869, 24 November 1879.
23. *Ibid.*, 27 November 1886.
24. Athenian Literary Society Minutes, 1882.
25. Martin, *History*, 46.
26. Faculty Minutes, November 1876.
27. Fowler Memoirs, Book 2, 45; Faculty Minutes, 5 April 1872, 10 September 1893.
28. Faculty Minutes, 1 December 1880.
29. *Ibid.*, 5 April 1872.
30. Martin, *History*, 47.

### Chapter 3

1. LeRoy A. Martin, *A History of Tennessee Wesleyan College, 1857-1957* (U. S. A., 1957), 49.
2. John McClure Sharp, *Recollections and Hearsays of Athens: Fifty Years and Beyond* (Athens, 1933), 26; Grant Memorial University promotional material in Glenn Archival Room, Merner Pfeiffer Library; Martin, *History*, 49.

3. Promotional material.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. Martin, *History*, 51-57.
7. *Journal of the Holston Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 10-16 October 1888.
8. *Ibid.*, 2 October 1872.
9. John Longwith, *Light Upon a Hill; The University of Chattanooga, 1886-1996* (Chattanooga, 2000), 8.
10. *Ibid.*, 8-9.
11. *Journal of Holston Conference*, 15 October 1879.
12. *Methodist Advocate*, 7 June 1882.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Journal of Holston Conference*, 19-23 October 1882.
15. *Chattanooga Times*, 2 June 1886.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Longwith, *Light Upon a Hill*, 36.
18. Quoted in Martin, *History*, 69.
19. *Journal of Holston Conference*, 10-16 October 1888.
20. *Chattanooga Times*, 20 October 1888.
21. Quoted in Martin, *History*, 75.
22. *Chattanooga Times*, 24 May 1893.
23. *Athens Post*, 4 May 1893.
24. *Chattanooga Times*, 24 May 1893.
25. *U. S. Grant University Catalogue*, 1891-92.

26. John McClure Sharp, *Recollections and Hearsays of Athens: Fifty Years and Beyond* (Athens, 1933), 49-50.
27. *Parker College of U. S. Grant University*, Announcement, 1897-98.
28. Memoirs of James Alexander Fowler, Book 2, 38.
29. Faculty Minutes, 11 November 1895.
30. *Ibid.*, 17 August 1895.
31. Martin, *History*, 184.
32. Faculty Minutes, 11 November 1895.
33. *Ibid.*, 12 April 1897.
34. Unpublished autobiography of Harry Russell Caldwell, 38-42, in possession of his daughter, Mrs. Muriel C. Pilley Nashville, Tennessee. Caldwell was a 1898 graduate of Grant Memorial University, and his father, L. B. Caldwell, had served both as a faculty member and as a trustee in the 1880's.
35. Faculty Minutes, 6 March 1899.
36. *Ibid.*, 19 December 1892.
37. *Ibid.*, 30 April 1894.
38. *Ibid.*, 21 May 1888.
39. *Record of Alumni Association*, 1871-1906, 95-97.
40. *Ibid.*, 98-100, 102.
41. *Ibid.*, 100.
42. *U. S. Grant University Catalogue*, 1896-97; see Prof. Bolton's handwritten notes in catalogue.
43. Faculty Minutes, 22 February 1893.
44. *Ibid.*, 23 June 1897.



## Chapter 4

1. John Longwith, *Light Upon a Hill: The University of Chattanooga, 1886-1996* (Chattanooga, 2000), 49.
2. *Ibid.*, 50.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Minutes of Board of Trustees, 16 May 1899, 7 June 1900.
5. Longwith, *Light Upon a Hill*, 54; Faculty Minutes, 10 September 1899.
6. *Methodist Advocate Journal*, 6 October 1898.
7. *Ibid.*, 31 May 1900.
8. LeRoy A. Martin *A History of Tennessee Wesleyan College, 1857-1957* (U. S. A., 1957), 92; *Journal of Holston Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 8 October 1898.
9. Minutes of Board of Trustees, 24 May 1902; Red Book: University at Athens, Tennessee During Injunction Period, 1904-1905, unpublished manuscript, Glenn Archival Room, Merner-Pfeiffer Library.
10. Red Book, 14-15; Gilbert Govan and James Livinggood, *University of Chattanooga, Sixty Years* (Chattanooga, 1947), 108-109.
11. McMinn County Chancery Court Records, 4 August 1904.
12. John W. Bayless to John H. Race, 18 August 1904.
13. John H. Race to John W. Bayless, 20 August 1904.
14. Red Book, 15-23.
15. *Ibid.*, 21.
16. Resolution of Alumni Association, 16 May 1905.
17. Red Book, 52-53.
18. *Ibid.*, 52-54.
19. *Ibid.*, 54; Faculty Minutes, 3 April 1906.
20. Red Book, 57.

21. James A. Fowler to John H. Race, 10 June 1906.
22. William Banfield to John H. Race, 27 June 1906.
23. Red Book, 68-69.
24. Martin, *History*, 189.
25. *Ibid.*, 190.
26. *Ibid.*, 191-192.
27. *Ibid.*, 191.
28. *Ibid.*, 194.
29. *Ibid.*, 189.

## **Chapter 5**

1. *The Exponent*, October 1912.
2. LeRoy A. Martin, *A History of Tennessee Wesleyan College, 1857-1957* (U.S.A., 1957), 196. *The Exponent*, February 1913.
3. Faculty Minutes, 8 September 1909.
4. *The Exponent*, September 1912.
5. *Ibid.*
6. John Longwith, *Light Upon a Hill: The University of Chattanooga, 1886-1996* (Chattanooga, 2000), 76-77.
7. *Ibid.*, 78.
8. Faculty Minutes, 16 November 1919.
9. *The Exponent*, February 1911.
10. *Ibid.*, September 1912.
11. *Ibid.*, October 1912.
12. *Ibid.*, April 1911.

13. *Ibid.*, March 1911, February 1911.
14. *Ibid.*, April 1911.
15. *Ibid.*, February 1913.
16. Martin, *History*, 199-200.
17. Faculty Minutes, 13 September 1916.
18. *Methodist Advocate Journal*, 31 May 1917.
19. *Ibid.*, 21 June 1919, 6 September 1917, 20 December 1917.
20. *Ibid.*, 19 July 1917.
21. *Ibid.*, 23 August 1917.
22. *Ibid.*, 19 September 1918.
23. *Ibid.*, 18 July 1918.
24. Minutes of Philomathean Literary Society, unpublished manuscript, Glenn Archival Room, Merner-Pfeiffer Library.
25. *Catalogue of The Athens School, 1918-1919*; Dr. Joy Bayless interview, 15 July 1985.
26. *Catalogue of The Athens School, 1918-1919*; Faculty Minutes, 14 January 1918.
27. Faculty Minutes, 8 January 1917.
28. *Ibid.*, December 1917; Bayless interview.
29. D.A. Bolton, Historic Facts, unpublished manuscript, Glenn Archival Room.
30. *Methodist Advocate Journal*, 18 July 1918.
31. *Ibid.*, 11 July 1918.
32. *Catalogue of The Athens School, 1918-1919*.
33. *Methodist Advocate*, 7 November 1918; Bolton, "Historic Facts."
34. Reba Bayless Boyer interview, 22 August 1985.

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1. Margaret Hoback Jones, personal interview, 12 July 1985.
2. LeRoy A. Martin, *A History of Tennessee Wesleyan College, 1857-1957* (U.S.A., 1957), 118.
3. *Nocatula*, 1924.
4. Gilbert Govan and James Livingood, *University of Chattanooga, Sixty Years* (Chattanooga, 1947), 142.
5. *Tennessee Wesleyan College Catalogue, 1925-26*.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Martin, *History* 133; *Catalogue, 1925-26*; Questionnaire of Tennessee Wesleyan College, 1928.
8. Mr. and Mrs. Howard Dennis, personal interview, 13 August 1985.
9. *Nocatula*, 1926-28.
10. Faculty Minutes, 30 April 1928; Govan and Livingood, 132.
11. Faculty Minutes, 20 May 1929.
12. Colonel Robert C. Hornsby, "Academics Weren't Stressed for T.W.C. Athletes in 1920," *The Daily Post-Athenian*, 8 October 1982; Reba Bayless Boyer, personal interview, 22 August 1985.
13. Faculty Minutes, 20 May 1929.
14. Boyer interview; Memory Book of Flora Lillian Bible (Courtesy of Mrs. Howard Bales).
15. *Nocatula*, 1926; *New Exponent*, December 1927; Calvin B.T. Lee, *The Campus Scene, 1900-1970* (New York, 1970), 2.
16. *Tennessee Wesleyan College Catalogue, 1926-27*; *New Exponent*, December 1928; Faculty Minutes, 28 November 1927.
17. Faculty Minutes, 4 February 1929.
18. *Ibid.*, 19 September 1927; 4 April 1929; 26 January 1928.
19. Bible, Memory Book; *New Exponent*, February-March 1928; Martin, *History*, 212.
20. Faculty Minutes, 30 April 1928; 18 November 1928.



21. Martin, *History*, 216; *New Expouent*, January 1928, March 1928.
22. *Nocatula*, 1928; *New Expouent*, March 1928; Dennis interview.
23. Dennis interview.
24. Emma Sue Williams, personal interview, 22 August 1985; Boyer interview.
25. *Tennessee Wesleyan College Catalogue, 1917-1933*.
26. *Ibid.*, 1917-1929.
27. Martin, *History* 136-38.
28. Faculty Minutes, 15 February 1926; 21 February 1927.
29. *Bulletin (Special Edition)*, *Tennessee Wesleyan College*, October 1928.

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1. *Tennessee Wesleyan College Catalog, 1929-39*.
2. *Ibid.*, 1929-1931
3. *The Daily Post-Athenian*, 8 July 1932.
4. *Catalog*, 1930-36.
5. Faculty Minutes, 8 February 1932.
6. *Ibid.*, 23 February 1932.
7. *Ibid.*, 9 March 1933; *Nocatula*, Summer 1930; Board of Trustees Minutes, 29 May 1933.
8. Claryse D. Myers, personal letter, 1 May 1983.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Faculty Minutes, 1 April 1935.
11. Board of Trustees Minutes, 1 June 1931.
12. *Tennessee Wesleyan College Bulletin*, March 1931; Executive Committee Minutes, 23 October 1931.

13. Board of Trustee Minutes, 1934; LeRoy A. Martin, *A History of Tennessee Wesleyan, 1857-1957* (U.S.A., 1957), 134.
14. Board of Trustees Minutes, 1934; Executive Committee Minutes, 13 February 1936; Faculty Minutes, 4 October 1937.
15. Faculty Minutes, 9 September 1935, 21 September 1936; J. Huse Martin interview, 24 June 1983.
16. Faculty Minutes, 20 September 1930, 15 May 1933, 15 January 1934, 16 April 1934.
17. Faculty Minutes, 13 April 1936, 2 October 1939; *Catalog*, 1929-32, *Nocatula*, 1930.
18. Board of Trustees Minutes, 1934.
19. Faculty Minutes, 3 February 1936.
20. Board of Trustees Minutes, 1 June 1931; Martin, *History* 218.
21. *Nocatula*, 1935-1937.
22. *Ibid.*, 1930; Faculty Minutes, 14 January 1935.
23. *Catalog*, 1929-30; *Nocatula*, 1930
24. Judge Fred Puett interview, 5 December 1981.
25. *Ibid.*; Faculty Minutes, 26 January 1937, 17 May 1938.
26. Board of Trustees Minutes, 1934, 1935.
27. Martin, *History*, 275-276.
28. *Tennessee Wesleyan College Bulletin*, December 1939.

## Chapter 8

1. Letter, McNeely Bell Company, 15 March 1938; Claryse Myers, "History of Tennessee Wesleyan College Library," unpublished manuscript, 45.
2. Howard Bales, personal interview, 6 July 1983.
3. Board of Trustees Minutes, 1941-42; Executive Committee Minutes, 1 June 1941.
4. *Nocatula*, 17 December 1942.

5. *Ibid.*
6. LeRoy A. Martin, *A History of Tennessee Wesleyan College: 1857-1957* (U.S.A., 1957), 231.
7. *Tennessee Wesleyan College Bulletin*, 1942.
8. *Ibid.*, February 1943.
9. Gary Cole unpublished manuscript, (no date), 15.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Board of Trustees Minutes, 1 June 1942; Executive Committee Minutes, 5 June 1942.
12. Board of Trustees Minutes, 24 May 1943.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. Executive Committee Minutes, 7 September 1942, 14 September 1942, 25 November 1942.
16. *Nocatula*, 11 April 1944.
17. *Tennessee Wesleyan College Bulletin*, February 1945.
18. *Nocatula*, 30 October 1944.
19. Board of Trustees Minutes, 1 June 1942.
20. Martin, *History*, 147-151.
21. *Ibid.*, 151-152.
22. Board of Trustees Minutes, 1 April 1943.
23. *Ibid.*, 22 August 1944.
24. *Journal of the Holston Annual Conference*, 10 October 1945.
25. *Ibid.*, 3-6 October 1946.
26. Martin, *History*, 152.
27. Tom Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation* (New York, 1999), 125-133.

28. Gary Cole, unpublished manuscript, (no date).
29. Board of Trustees Minutes, 28 May 1945.
30. *Bulldog*, 9 December 1946.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Tennessee Wesleyan College Bulletin*, February 1947.
33. *Bulldog*, 9 December 1948.
34. *Tennessee Wesleyan College Bulletin*, February 1947.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Bulldog*, 26 January 1948.
37. *Ibid.*; Nancy Wilkins Dooley Burn, personal interview, 22 May 2004.
38. George Naff, interview, August 1998; *Bulldog*, 10 February 1947.
39. Board of Trustees Minutes, 6 June 1949; Ralph W. Lloyd to James L. Robb, 5 January 1950.
40. Board of Trustees Minutes, 24 March 1950.
41. *Tennessee Wesleyan College Bulletin*, March 1950.
42. *Ibid.*, August 1950.

## Chapter 9

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# KEEPING THE *Faith* 1857-2007

## *Authors*

### **BILL AKINS**

Bill Akins is a 1957 graduate of Tennessee Wesleyan College, and later earned a master's degree from Georgia Southern University. In 1989, TWC conferred on him an honorary doctorate degree. He is retired from Mayfield Dairy Farms, Inc., where he served as personnel manager, and from Tennessee Wesleyan College as director of the evening program. He has authored, co-authored and co-edited several books and publications on local history. The most recent is *Torn Apart: McMinn County, Tennessee During the Civil War*, published in 2006, which he co-authored. The East Tennessee Historical Society selected the book for an Award of Distinction in 2007.

### **GENEVIEVE WIGGINS**

Genevieve Wiggins, Professor Emerita of Tennessee Wesleyan, continues part-time teaching as an adjunct professor of English at Cleveland State Community College. Her educational background includes a B.A. from the University of Chattanooga, an M.A. from Vanderbilt University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee. She is the author of a critical biography of L.M. Montgomery, published as part of the Twayne World Authors series, and contributed to and co-edited two books of local history, *Over Here and After* and *Hard Times Remembered*.

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